VOL. 271 NO. 5 MAY 1993

The Atlantic

WHY BILL CAN'T IGNORE ROSS / THE INVENTION OF NEW DOWNTOWNS

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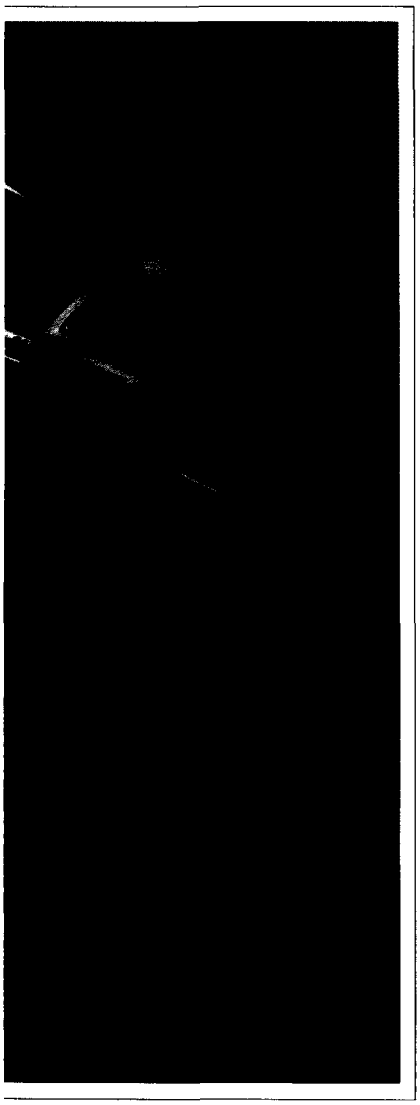

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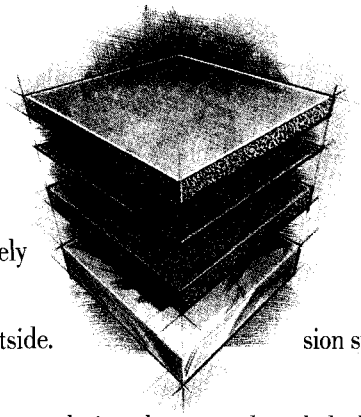

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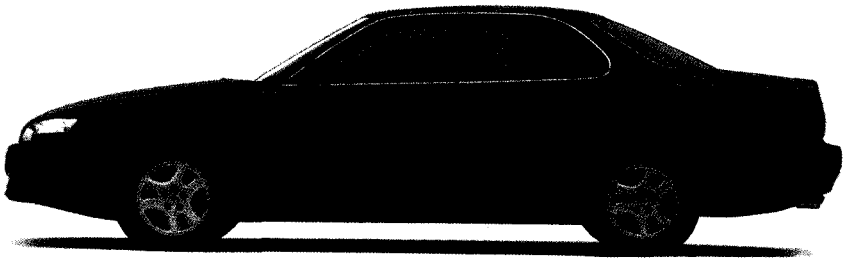

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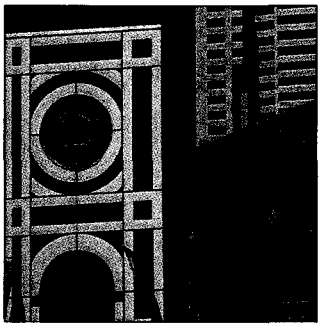

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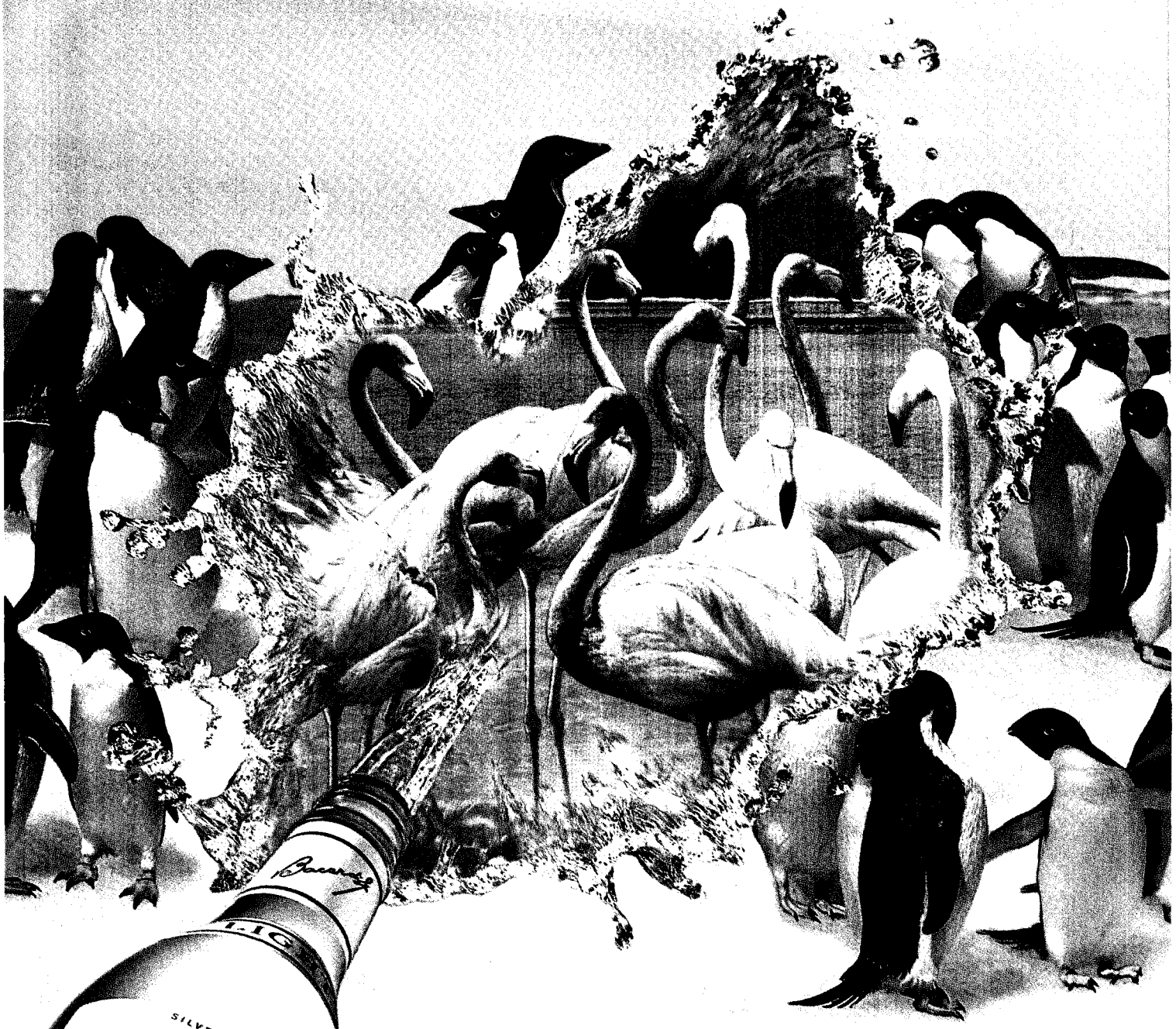

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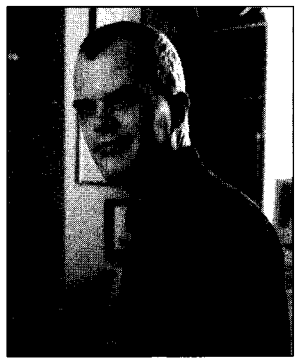
745 BOYLSTON STREET

IT MAY HAVE BEEN the earliest debut in the history of American journalism: Richard Brookhiser had his first article published, in *National Review*, at the age of fourteen. Young Brookhiser, as the convention governing narratives of precocity dictates we call him, had witnessed an anti–Vietnam War demonstration at his high school, and had written a letter about it to his brother at Yale. Impressed, his father urged Richard to send the letter to *National Review*. Months later, just when Brookhiser had given up hope, he learned that "Moratorium Day at Irondequoit High School" had not only been accepted but was about to appear.


NEIL SELKIRK

For Brookhiser, it was the beginning of a long association with the journal of conservative opinion founded and edited by William F. Buckley Jr. After graduating from Yale, where he majored in English, Brookhiser rose from intern to writer to managing editor to senior editor of *National Review*. His first formal writing assignment came in the fall of 1977, when he was twenty-two years old. "The Republicans have now been out of office a year," Buckley told him as he was leaving an editorial meeting. "I want you to go down to Washington and talk to them and write a piece about why they think the federal government doesn't work." He added, with intimidating breeziness, "Twenty thousand words should do."

Somewhere in here Brookhiser (a bass) joined a Manhattan choral group. There he met his future wife, Jeanne Safer, a psychoanalyst, whose personality type Brookhiser spiritedly explores in his essay, "Intense," in this issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*. Now the couple both work professionally, he writing and she listening, in their two-bedroom apartment near Gramercy Park, and its walls must occasionally echo to the sound of political debate, since she is a liberal Democrat—intense, no doubt—and he decidedly is not.

Last year Brookhiser had a cancer scare: a tumor "the size of a large grapefruit" was taken out of his abdomen. He has since made a strong recovery. Bald from chemotherapy, for a time he went about Manhattan with brightly colored scarves over his head. "They were made from the hems of my wife's kimonos," he says. On several occasions he even appeared on national television in this haberdashery. "Do you want me to tell the viewers why you are wearing that thing?" one talk-show host, Charlie Rose, asked. "No," Brookhiser replied, with an earned insouciance. —THE EDITORS

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HOW MANY IS TOO MANY?

Charles Mann's article "How Many Is Too Many?" (February *Atlantic*) missed an important opportunity to deepen the public's understanding of the significance of global population levels.

Most of the major international agencies concerned with population growth today acknowledge that reducing fertility is inexorably linked to raising the dismally low status of women. It's not enough to establish more family-planning programs; they must be accompanied by efforts to increase women's access to education and employment, to enhance their civil rights, to end male violence against women, and to improve women's health. In short, women's chances to have a life beyond the role of wife and mother must be expanded if fertility is to decline.

If we care about the future of the planet, we will have to start paying a lot more attention to the population-environment equation and to finding ways to balance competing needs. It is going to take major investments by the richer countries in behalf of the poorer ones to foster economic growth, especially growth that pollutes less and consumes less energy than our own industrialization processes did in the past century. Saving the earth from "overpopulation" will undoubtedly require important changes in the way we in the North live and the amount of resources we consume. These changes will require sacrifice, and will most certainly be unpopular.

The job of journalists, educators, and policy makers is to find ways in which to convey both the complexity and the urgency of these issues to the public and to the press for more-significant action. We owe our children more than to simply shrug our shoulders over the endless standoff between biologists and economists.

BERNADETTE ORR
Melrose, Mass.

The dispute between economists and demographers involves two very different time frames.

Economists can take a very long view and expect that humankind will somehow come to grips with an increasing population. Demographers, on the other hand, are focused on the shorter term, when disruptions and dislocations, because of the strains of coping with many more people by means of systems designed for many fewer, are inevitable.

These disruptions and dislocations, which Charles Mann so well describes, are what we have to deal with now. We need, therefore, both short- and long-term proposals for dealing with a super-populated world.

PEGGY MCGARRAHAN
New York, N.Y.

It is interesting to see Malthus's ideas reappearing in the mouths of biologists. It reminds me of a famous quotation from J. M. Keynes:

> The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist.

Economists have wrestled with and rejected Malthus's conclusions on overpopulation, whereas biologists seem to be fixated on them. Since it is from Malthus that economics came to be known as the dismal science, perhaps it is time to offer that title to biology.

PAMELA LOWRY
Illinois Wesleyan University
Bloomington, Ill.

As a child, I for some reason became concerned that cemeteries would eventually fill up the earth, leaving no room for people to live. To prove to

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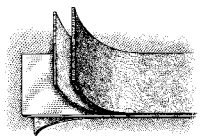
Pictured above is a car for people

Above, you'll find a photograph of two car interiors.

The first is apparent upon inspection. Buttery-soft leather; programmable seat, headrest, mirror, and steering wheel adjustments; individual front passenger climate controls; and a 250-watt, 11-speaker, 7-amplifier Bose® Beta sound system.

But in the split second of a collision, this luxurious interior transforms into something altogether different: arguably the most advanced automotive safety system in production today.



Elegant sculpted curves become soft deformable surfaces, with padded knee bolsters designed to crush on impact.

Hand-finished exotic wood trim reveals itself to be a

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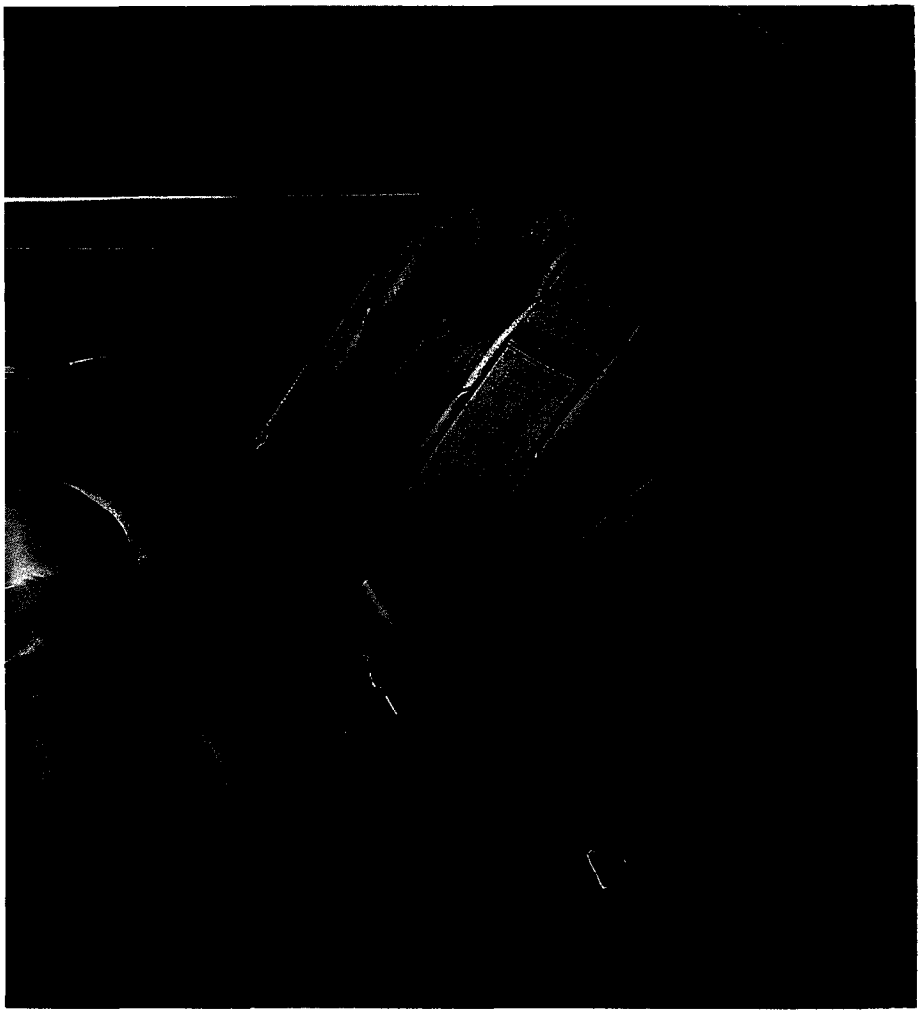
the finer things in life.



who appreciate life.

special laminate, reinforced with thin strips of aluminum designed to prevent splintering in key areas.

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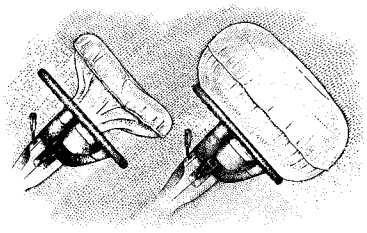
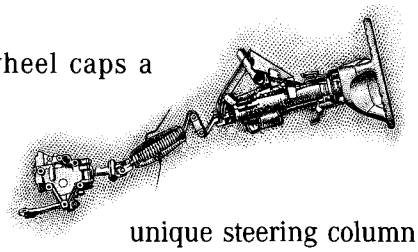


Emergency Tensioning Retractors, deploy air bags, or both.

Plush carpeting hides thick foam, fitted into the front footwells to protect feet and lower legs from shock.

The leather-clad steering wheel caps a



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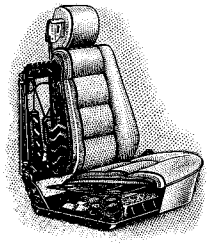

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everyone what a disaster was coming, I set about calculating how much land was going to be taken up by all the bodies. After estimating that each person would take up twelve square feet of ground, I calculated to my dismay that every person alive could be buried in less than a ten-mile square—not much of a looming catastrophe.

Recent warnings of the overpopulation of the earth have inspired me to make similar calculations, and the facts again turn out to be more impressive than the fears.

It turns out that every person in the United States, Canada, and Mexico (365 million people) could move to the state of Indiana and live in conditions no more crowded than the city of Toronto, and half the state would still be empty. In fact, every person in the world could move to Kansas and it would be less crowded than the city of Madrid.

MARK WARDA
Belleair, Fla.

After ploughing through the tedium of economists' and biologists' arguments about How many is too many?, Charles Mann finally noted the unarguable: The more people we have in a given area, the less comfortable is daily life. Imagine 14 million people in New York City proper, or more than four million in Dallas. Economists who argue that the planet will *feed* a few billion more are completely missing the point.

There is also the problem of governance. A country whose people's median age is eighteen is a country of narcissistic adolescents obsessed with becoming adults. Economists should contemplate the economic problems of a man and wife with six children, and then consider the corollary—a government attempting to support a nation of children.

ROBERT H. PASCHALL
Bishop, Calif.

As a seventy-two-year-old native Californian, I found myself in strong agreement with the Cassandra position described in "How Many Is Too Many?" Must we citizens just sit and watch this problem play itself out to its inevitable dismal conclusion? I was flabbergasted when none of the candidates even discussed population growth in the recent presidential race. Two organizations (Population/Environment Balance and Negative Population Growth) are attempting to get legislation passed that encourages smaller families by removing the tax exemption after a third child and limits immigration to 200,000 annually (equal to the emigration rate). I really believe the time has come for citizens to let legislators know that we Cassandras constitute a significant voting block.

L. E. SACKS
Berkeley, Calif.

In questioning the link between overpopulation and ecocatastrophe Charles Mann cited the remarkable recoveries of populations of salmon, white-tailed deer, and wild turkey despite a dramatic coincident increase in human population. These examples were poorly chosen and fail to support Mann's argument about "good news," serving instead only to emphasize our selfish attitudes toward nature. Mann might just as well have noted the incredible recovery made by populations of domestic turkeys every year after their decimation at Thanksgiving. Or how about the amazing proliferation of feed corn over the past few centuries? Populations of salmon, deer, and wild turkey were able to increase because they are all game species, and as such they benefit from the attention of lobbies interested in the preservation of hunting. As for the improved air quality in Tokyo, once again Mann chose a case of human self-interest. Tokyo's air quality has improved because its citizens found it difficult to breathe smog.

If Mann truly wanted to investigate the possible link between overpopulation and ecocatastrophe, he should have examined how human beings interact with species we consider economically unimportant. The overwhelming consensus of the scientific community is that we are in the midst of the greatest number of extinctions this planet has ever known, and the great majority of them have been and continue to be caused directly by human activity. See, for example, *The Diversity of Life*, by E. O. Wilson, who conservatively estimates today's rate of extinction to be 27,000 species a year. Furthermore, for every species that will never again grace our planet, another score are rare or endangered. This is not "good news."

STEPHEN D. MOE
Palatine, Ill.

Charles Mann replies:

The responses to my article were divided, like the population debate itself, between Cassandras with powerful emotional arguments and Pollyannas with cold calculations. Pollyanna Mark Warda notes that everyone could fit into an Indiana-sized city. Such calculations, though fun, aren't useful. We would actually occupy a much larger space, because we would still grow food. Besides, as Cassandra Robert Paschall points out, people would not like to live in that city. If Mr. Paschall carefully read the "tedium" of the economists' and biologists' arguments, though, he would find that his main point ("the more people we have in a given area, the less comfortable is daily life") is not unarguable. History is replete with examples of areas that grew more comfortable as population rose. In 1910 the U.S. population was 100 million, but our rivers were poisoned, our forests ransacked, and our cities beset by pollution, crime, and disease. Why, Pollyannas ask, should the trend reverse now?

I agree with Bernadette Orr, apparently a Cassandra, that increasing opportunities for women would reduce birth rates, and said so in the article, on page 53. I don't agree, however, that I shrugged my shoulders about the standoff between economists and biologists. The population question, I argued, is like the budget deficit: the remedies for the problem are fairly well understood, but political uncertainties cloud their adoption. Thus wading into the thickets of short-term political reform may be, paradoxically, more important than any long-term caring "about the future of the planet."

Stephen Moe has an excellent point. I didn't discuss biodiversity much, partly because I had already addressed the issue in these pages, and partly because it is such a knotty subject that I couldn't include it without making the article excessively long. Although there is plenty of room to disagree with E. O. Wilson's estimate, the collision of biodiversity with our growing population cannot be good news. Minimizing the impact will require thoughtful action by our elected representatives—a dismaying thought, and one that recalls the argument I made to Ms. Orr. Finally, I thank Peggy McGarrahan and Pamela Lowry for their letters, one thoughtful, the other amusing.

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AT LAST COUNT

The sextet of maps depicting the spread of AIDS across Ohio (At Last Count: "The Geography of AIDS," January *Atlantic*) demonstrates the difficulty of making maps that are not only eye-catching (as those are) but also informative and clear (as those are not).

By omitting a geographic scale, place names, and the network of county lines, the map makers divorce their data from the real world and force readers to cope with a pattern of such severe abstraction that they can extract little information. Organizing numbers of cases by area, as the AIDS maps do, usually misleads readers, because people tend to interpret larger areas to mean larger quantities, regardless of tint or shading. Perhaps most serious, these maps use different colors for different numbers of AIDS victims. Colors are admirably suited to portraying qualitative differences, as between land and water, but they are remarkably poor for quantitative data.

Despite the warnings of cartographic textbooks, such errors are not uncommon. Even the U.S. Census Bureau fell into the colored-area trap in the 1970s (and drew a strong reaction from cartographers). Valid designs that might dramatically depict the increase and spread of AIDS include plotting dots according to the distribution of cases (perhaps using a strong color for the dots and different dot sizes to symbolize different numbers of patients) or shading county areas with tones of gray to represent not raw quantities but rates or intensities, such as AIDS patients per 1,000 people in the area.

What may be most unfortunate about the AIDS maps is the example they set for others. As the popularity of computer graphics grows, and mapping programs for personal computers multiply, many authors and editors will adopt the kinds of data graphics they find in influential magazines like *The Atlantic*. In his book *How to Lie With Maps* (1991), Mark Monmonier warns against being "seduced with the brilliant colors of computer graphics systems into using reds, blues, greens, yellows, and oranges to portray quantitative differences" and asks how many "software users know that using area-shading symbols with magnitude data produces misleading maps?" Maps are indeed powerful, as your article says, but they require good design to achieve good effect.

JOHN H. LONG
Chicago, Ill.

Try as we might, no one in this dormitory understands the computer-generated map sequences explained in "The Geography of AIDS." We wish your writers had informed us of some of the factors considered by the "complex formulas" they evoke.

Your claim that the map sequences are analogous to temperature maps is problematic. The contour lines drawn on a temperature map are completely logical: an area is colored in accordance with its thermometer reading. But the lines on your maps appear arbitrary. If anything, they describe the relative population densities within Ohio. This doesn't further understanding of the spread of AIDS, since all contagious diseases spread more readily in populated areas (not, as you imply, just AIDS, with its "intimate nature of transmission").

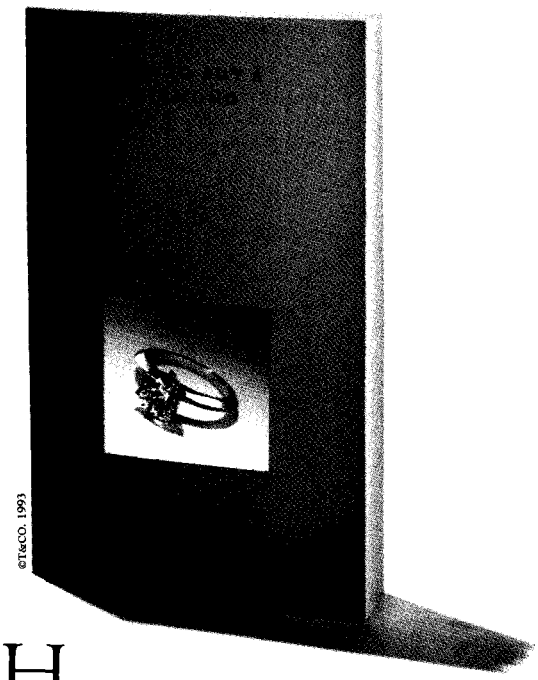
It is even harder to comprehend your numbers. According to the legend, a map color represents an absolute number of AIDS cases, not AIDS victims as a percentage of population. If this is the case, why don't your numbers add up to the totals? Here again the arbitrary contour lines daunt us. What is achieved by using them instead of administrative divisions? For us, making sense of your data required the recognition of county lines.

If, as you claim, a primary use of map sequences is educational, does it not behoove educators to make sure there is more to their data than a "visually arresting" representation? Asking young people to accept manipulated numbers without explanation is unjustified, no matter how noble the cause.

RYAN CVANCARA
Yale University
New Haven, Conn.

Peter Gould replies:

The field of geography still contains many people who, like John Long, believe that there is always a right way to



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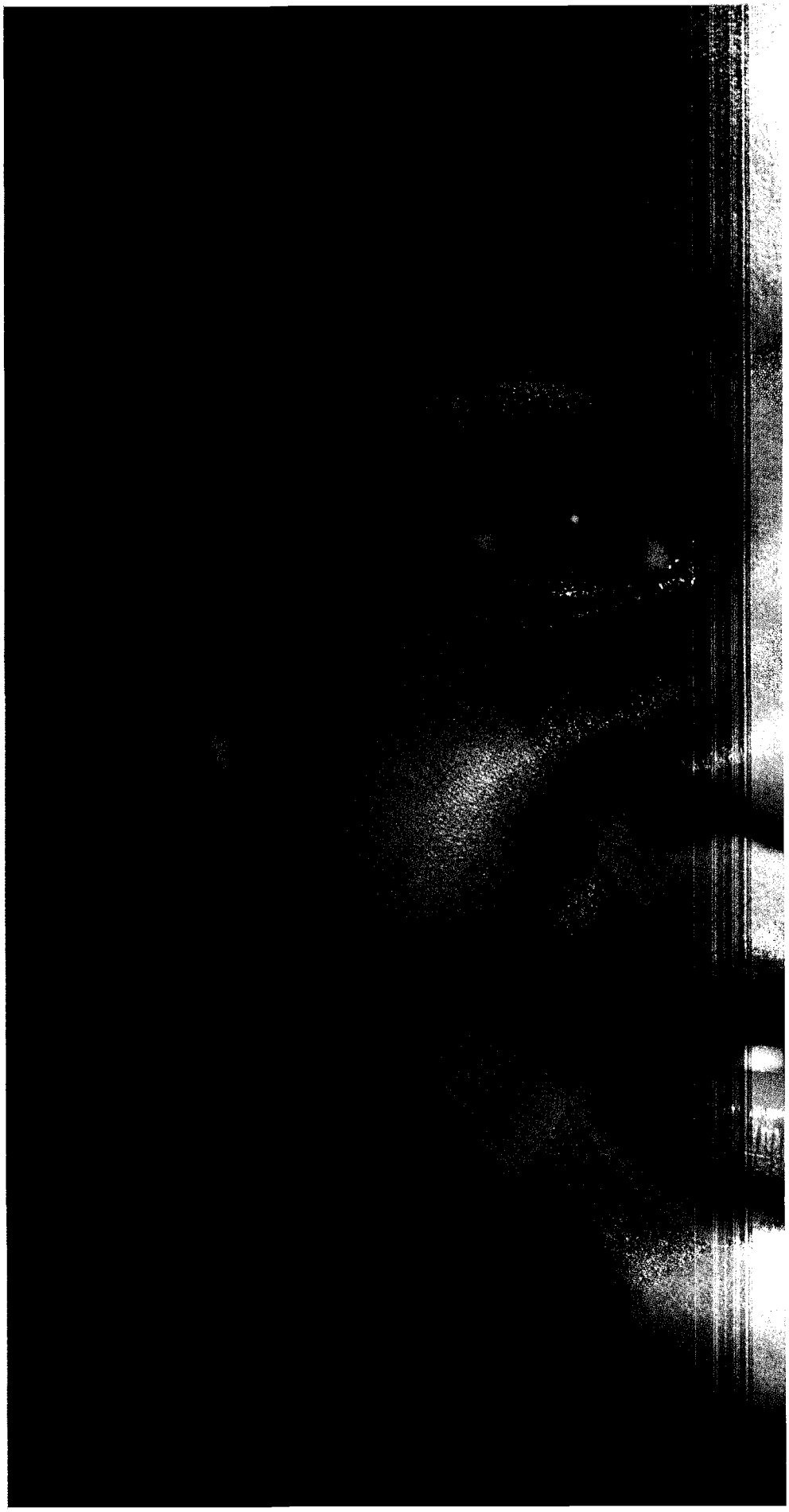

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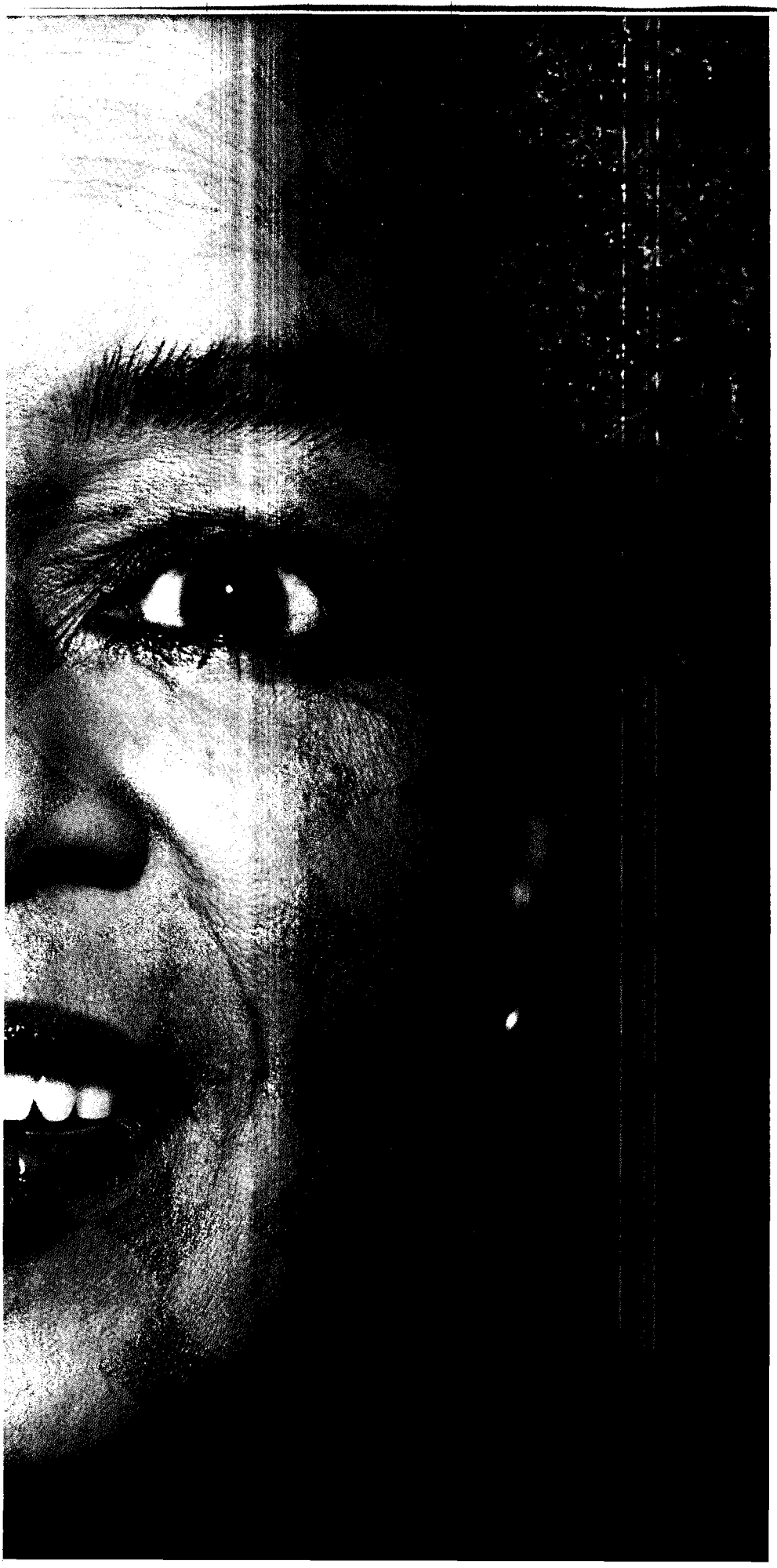

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represent information graphically. But often these people do not acknowledge that each viewer brings a unique interpretive perspective to the task of understanding graphic texts. Furthermore, *every* map distorts, precisely because it is always a re-presentation. I could not have used a dot map in the case of the AIDS data, because doing so would have broken patient confidentiality, and in any case each dot would represent only a "locational average" for an individual's probabilistic field of movement. I am sorry Long has problems with color's being used to represent quantitative data. Each day millions of readers across America understand weather maps in newspapers using the same colors and methods of spatial extrapolation from "spot readings."

Ryan Cvancara and his dormmates at Yale raise a more interesting problem. AIDS at this scale is strongly density-dependent, and the "complex formulas" do use various measures of population to forecast the 1993 and 1995 maps—forecasts we would be delighted to find were wrong as a result of marked changes in protective behavior or the arrival of a vaccine or cure. Spatial adaptive filtering is not something that can be explained properly in a short space; on a Cray supercomputer it takes forty hours to produce a predictive map of the United States like the ones of Ohio that appeared in *The Atlantic*. The advantage of spatial adaptive filtering is that it lets us use the spatial information in a map series to augment greatly the inadequate time-series analyses and predictions of traditional epidemiologists.

ISLAM AND LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

Bernard Lewis addresses an issue of great importance for U.S. foreign-policy makers—whether America should fear or welcome the growing strength of Islamic fundamentalist movements in the Middle East ("Islam and Liberal Democracy," February *Atlantic*). Unfortunately, he does not provide satisfactory answers to any of the difficult questions these policy makers must deal with.

Lewis cites Islamic history and culture in arguing convincingly that the prospects for Middle Eastern democracy are "not good." He points out that even if elections are held in Muslim countries, as they were recently in Algeria, Islamic fundamentalists will regard them merely as a vehicle to gain power, believing in "one man, one vote, once." He acknowledges further that these groups view Western values as a "deadly threat."

Yet Lewis would have the United States promote democracy in the region anyhow (he observes hopefully that the victory of fundamentalist forces in elections is "not inevitable"). Moreover, he apparently disapproves of America's "comfortable association" with conservative Muslim regimes like those in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. He would thus overturn our long-standing and successful policy of working with moderate Arab states and replace it with one that offers the "possibility" that democrats may form governments.

This is a logic I would hate to have to explain to the State Department's Middle East Bureau.

JAMES WORTHEN
Cambridge, Mass.

Many of us who teach in the field of Islamic studies, and are serious about bridging the gap of misunderstanding, misperceptions, and hatred that has existed between Christians and Muslims at least since the Crusades, feel terribly frustrated by the type of scholarship represented in Bernard Lewis's "Islam and Liberal Democracy," in which the scholarly establishment simply supplies fuel for the already lopsided treatment of Islam and Muslims that exists in the American media. Certainly Lewis and *The Atlantic* must know that such heightened rhetoric and imagery of polarization between Islam and the West is helping to create the reality that is feared while reifying an imagined dichotomy between "Judeo-Christian" and "Islamic" ethical principles.

Lewis's analysis includes methodological flaws that students at the first level of multicultural or interreligious studies are warned to avoid: he compares the positive institutions and ideals that developed in the "Judeo-Christian" context (for example, individual rights) with negative elements that emerged in the historical development of Islam (for example, concubinage, slavery, women's subservience). We know, of course, that these latter institutions have been part of Judeo-Christian history as well, and that Islamic peoples have the same desires that other human beings in the twentieth century have—namely, a just and economically stable society rooted in traditional religious values. He implies that a superior innate ethic of the "Judeo-Christian" West led to a presumedly fulfilled and successful liberal democracy, when in fact the realization of the ideals of democracy—justice for all citizens—has been slow in coming to certain people, yes, even in the democratic West, and there is no reason not to assume that the same slow, complex, multistaged process toward democracy and modernity is under way right now in Islamic countries, also in an incomplete form—the process perhaps complicated and stultified by the realities of colonial and postcolonial institutions.

We cannot look at half-baked attempts at democracy and declare present forms as final products. After all, Israel is depicted by "liberal democrats" as the incarnation of American democratic ideals, but in Israel the separation of Church and State (usually cited as a criterion for democratic government) is not accepted; Israel insists on Jewish identity as a prerequisite for citizenship and denies political and human rights to many Muslims and Christians under its occupation. Clearly, full-fledged democracy has not yet emerged in Israel, any more than it became effective for women or blacks in the United States until long after the Constitution was framed.

GISELA WEBB
Seton Hall University
South Orange, N.J.

Bernard Lewis replies:

James Worthen has missed my point. Far from disapproving of association with conservative Muslim regimes in the Islamic world, I warned of the danger of destabilizing them, by prodding them into premature and unworkable measures of democratization. Mr. Worthen may feel that the words I used, "odious dictatorships," apply to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. I do not. My objection was to "comfortable association" with radical tyrannies like that of Saddam Hussein. It should by now be clear that such association is both dangerous and demeaning, and I would hope that it is no longer necessary to explain this "to the State Department's Middle East Bureau."

Gisela Webb presents caricatures,

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both of my views ("implied" and "presumed") and of fashionable PC contortions—"there is no reason not to assume . . ." Her meaning seems to be that there are no real disagreements, only misperceptions, and no real differences, only the reified rhetoric of ill-intentioned observers, all of them Western. This view requires some adjustment of both the past and the present. But in the real world "misunderstandings" between Christians and Muslims do not date from the Crusades. If anything, they were decreased by the Crusades, when the parties got to know each other rather better. The differences began centuries earlier, when the Koran explicitly rejected certain basic Christian doctrines, and when Muslim armies wrested the then Christian lands of Syria, Palestine, Egypt, North Africa, Sicily, Spain, and Portugal from Christendom.

The resulting "misunderstandings" were no doubt worsened by the Turks' conquest of the Balkans and their two sieges of Vienna, and further aggravated when the Christian reconquest in Europe grew into European imperial domination of the lands of Islam.

To complete her constructed parallelism, Dr. Webb finds it necessary, inter alia, to ascribe legalized and accepted concubinage to Christendom, and to empty the word "democracy" of all but the vaguest and most general of meanings—except for the separation of Church and State, a criterion that would exclude Britain, Ireland, and the Scandinavian countries. Perhaps the most alarming feature of this approach is the underlying assumption that we show respect to another culture by saying that it is basically the same as ours, and insult it by recognizing some differences. I can think of no more arrogant and ethnocentric approach. If this is what first-year students in multicultural studies are taught, I am deeply fearful of what comes next. By facing our differences and disagreements with others frankly and honestly, we may enter into a dialogue based on mutual knowledge, understanding, and respect, through which we and they may achieve better relations and make progress toward the solution of our joint and separate problems. By treating others as sinless exemplars of what we define as virtue, and our differences as the exclusive result of our own sins or neuroses, we distort both our and—as far as we impose our views on them—their understanding of our cultures and problems, and obstruct others in their struggle to recognize and remedy the flaws of their societies.

Mr. Worthen feels that I am too indulgent of the Arab democratic movement, Dr. Webb that I am too dismissive. Both do less than justice to the brave men and women who are even now struggling to bring democracy to Iraq and other Arab countries under dictatorship. My critics' diametrically opposite complaints would seem to indicate that I have had some small success in attaining the scholarly objective of the just mean.

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ADVICE & CONSENT

I have just read Francis Flaherty's comments on "strange dictionaries" ("Lexicography: Odds and Ends," February *Atlantic*) with great enjoyment. I submit that my personal favorite, the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (U.S. Department of Labor), distributed to every state employment-security office and found in most libraries throughout the land, is the most widely available of these special-interest volumes. We use it daily, and find it as entertaining as it is useful. Where else, for instance, can one learn of the job duties of the *fish pitcher*, *frog shaker*, and *tick sewer*? How close are the duties of the *skin fitter* and the *plastic surgeon*; the *carpenter apprentice* and the *smash hand*; the *speech therapist* and the *lingo cleaner*? What can one surmise about the attributes and personality needed to become a *sulky driver*, an *abrasive grader*, an *odd bundle worker*, or a *humane officer*?

I am sorry to admit that we have uncovered only two oxymora among the more than 20,000 titles, the *concrete rubber* and the *upsetter setter-up*. We have, of course, been rather busy helping unemployed workers during the past few years, and can notice these little gems only in passing.

IAN W. SMITH
Vermont Department of Employment and Training
Brattleboro, Vt.

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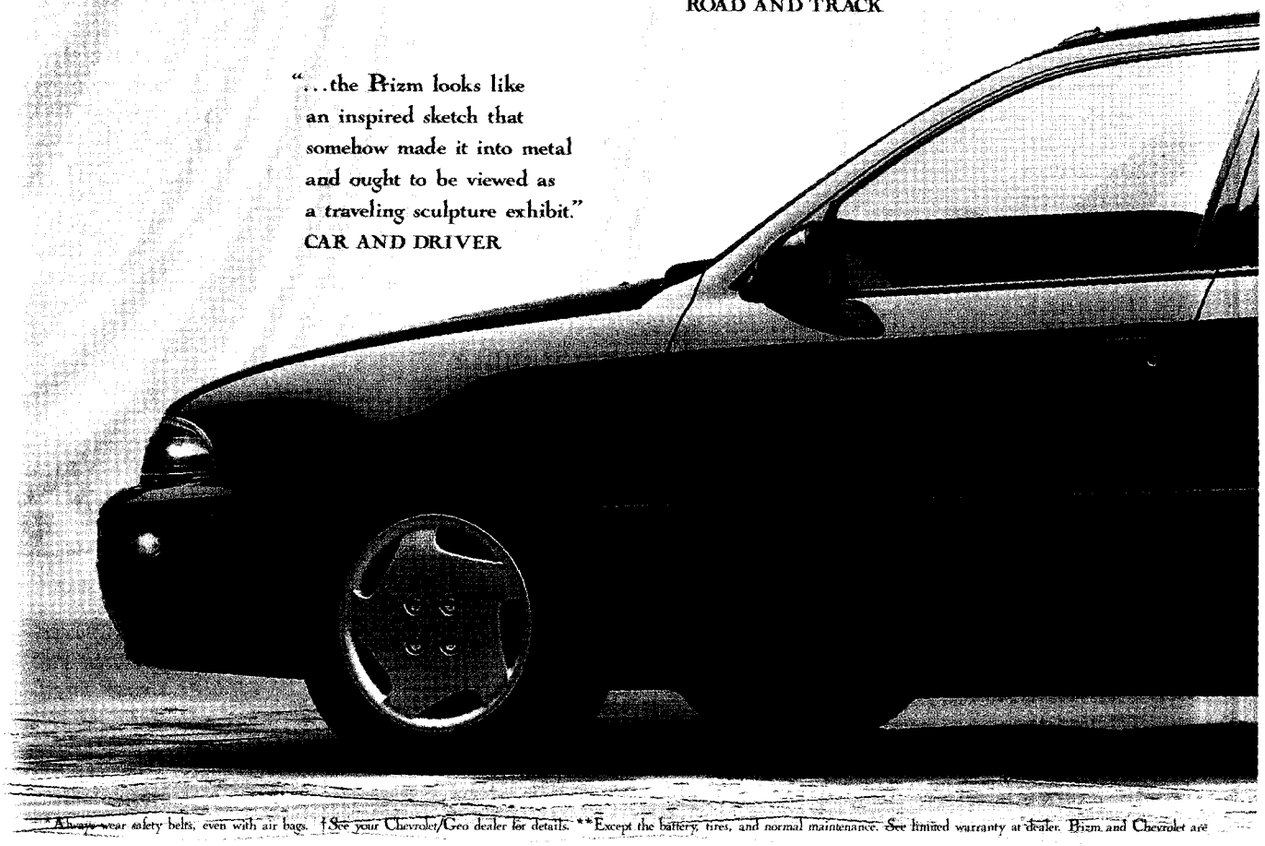

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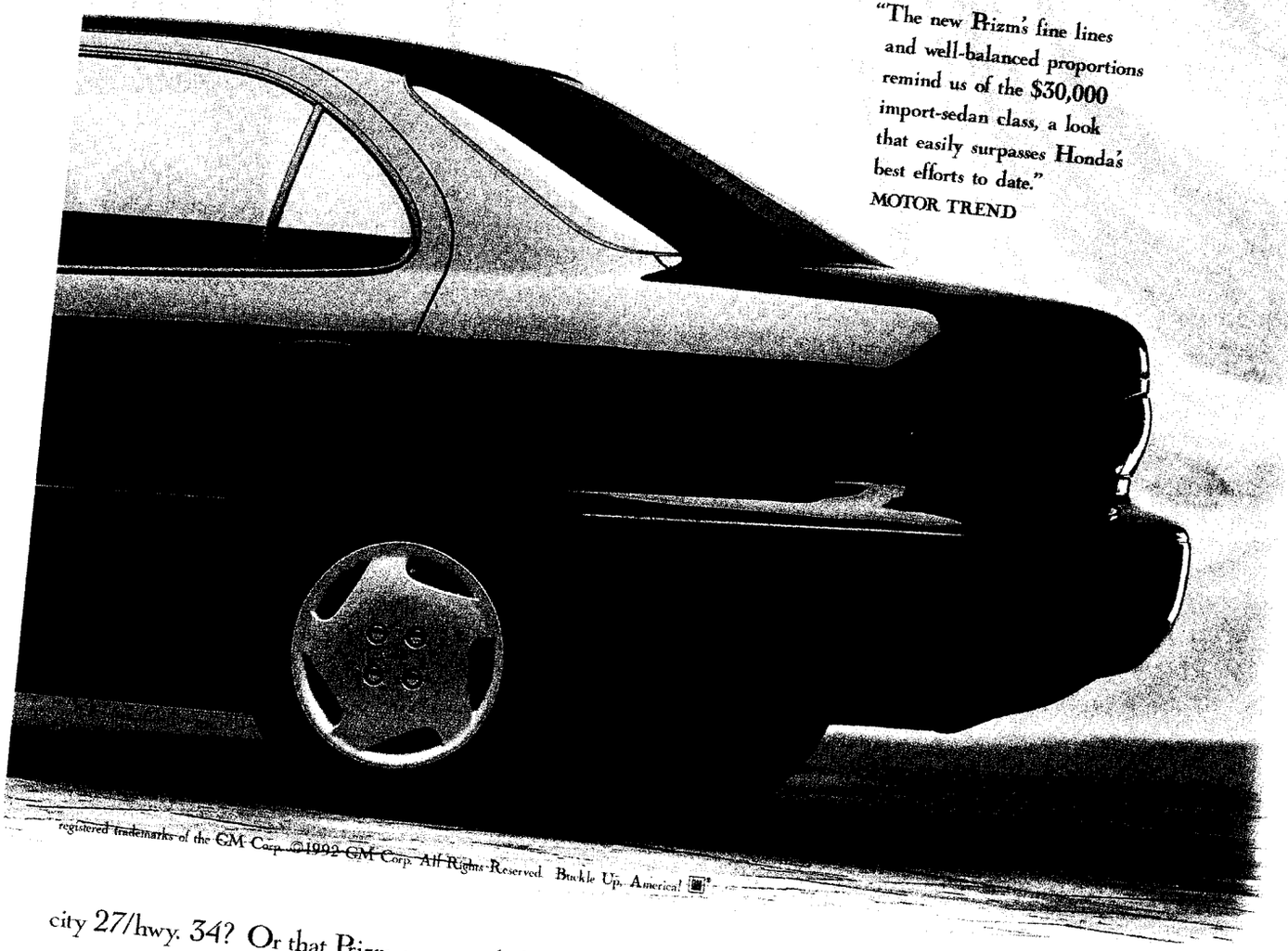

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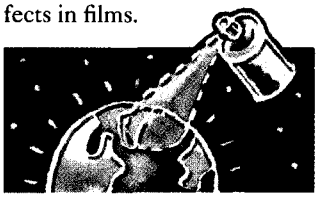
ARTS & LETTERS

May **20–22**, the 25th annual meeting of the American Society of Indexers, in Alexandria, Virginia. Among the topics for discussion by the 200 professional indexers convened will be a recent revision of the standard on which they rely. The new standard addresses database as well as print indexes and methods of analysis ranging from human decision-making to computer algorithms. The majority of indexers work freelance, and a third are self-taught; a popular educational choice among those who seek formal training is correspondence courses offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Although most indexers still work on books, some now range beyond the word, creating indexes for graphic elements such as photographs and paintings and for "perceptual objects," such as the sound effects in films.



GOVERNMENT

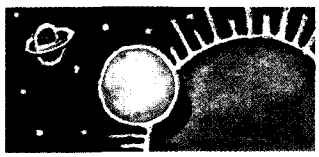
May **1**, a special election will be held in Texas for the Senate seat vacated earlier this year when Lloyd Bentsen became Secretary of the Treasury. Also today, FCC rules take effect requiring local telephone companies to install signaling equipment that will allow customers with toll-free 800 numbers to switch long-distance carriers without losing those numbers, which they may have spent time and money promoting. **4**, a special election will be held in Wisconsin for Secretary of Defense Les Aspin's former House seat. **15**, as of today, all retail products containing or manufactured with chlorofluorocarbons or other stratospheric-ozone depleters must carry labels warning of the deleterious effect those products have on the atmosphere.

ENVIRONMENT

May **10–14**, representatives from the 38 countries of the International Whaling Commission gather in Kyoto, Japan, for what is likely to be a fractious annual meeting. At issue: the eight-year moratorium on commercial whaling in international waters, imposed to let depleted populations recover. Nations with commercial whaling interests argue that minke whales have recovered and want the ban on them lifted. But obstacles to such an action remain, among them the need to agree on procedures for monitoring catches and population totals, and a proposal to make the Antarctic a whale sanctuary. One whaling country, Iceland, has withdrawn from the commission; another, Norway, has said it will resume whaling regardless of the meeting's outcome. A third, Japan, has chafed at the ban but so far honored it. In the meantime its fishing industry has mounted a nationwide campaign to promote the eating of whale meat. Environmentalists hope that the campaign will be blunted by a growing interest among Japanese in whale watching and a newfound taste for beef.

HEALTH & SAFETY

May **17–18**, the American Council for Drug Education's Scientific Advisory Board convenes in Crystal City, Virginia. High on its list of concerns is lysergic acid diethylamide, or LSD—a relic of the sixties which is now the fastest-spreading abused drug among those under twenty. Professionals suggest that LSD's renewed cachet may be related to its low cost—$2–$5 for a 12-hour trip—and to the relative difficulty teenagers today have in obtaining alcohol, now that every state has set the drinking age at 21. The current revival of pop culture from the 1960s is also thought to be a factor, especially among middle-class white teens. These users are too young to remember the negative experiences that many users of the drug reported in that decade, and during the past 10 years drug-education programs have rarely mentioned LSD. Users today typically treat LSD as a social intoxicant rather than as a vehicle for intense mind-altering experiences, and take it in much smaller doses than users did in the past.



THE SKIES

May **3**, and again on May **30**, the bright planet Jupiter lies just north of the waxing Moon. **6**, Full Moon, also called by the Cheyenne the Moon of the Time When the Horses Get Fat. **14**, Saturn lies north of the waning Moon in the morning sky. **21**, today's New Moon will partly eclipse the Sun in an event visible, in the morning, by those to the west of a sweeping line from north Texas to the New York–Ontario border.

Q & A

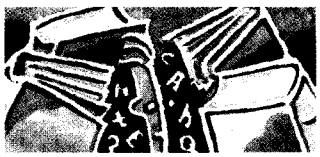
Do people who live in warm climates really develop "thin blood"?

Floridians visiting Maine for Christmas might in fact have somewhat more diluted blood than seasoned northerners, but this is only a coincidental result of certain physiological adaptations made over time to temperature; it does not in itself make people more or less comfortable in the cold. Those

unaccustomed to cold are more sensitive to it simply because they haven't made the appropriate adaptations, which include an altered ability to regulate heat production through shivering; "waves of dilation" that pump warm blood to the fingers, helping to preserve dexterity and inhibit frostbite; and, most important, constriction of the blood vessels in the skin, for better insulation. This last process displaces blood toward the center of the circulatory system; the body may respond to this shift as it does to an excess of fluids, leading to increased urination and hence to slightly thickened blood. Conversely, over time a body adapts to warm weather by sweating more easily and copiously and shunting blood to the skin for more efficient cooling. Certain hormonal adjustments also occur, which may increase body water and plasma, thinning the blood.

50 YEARS AGO

H. M. Tomlinson, writing in the May, 1943, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "The spirit of man, our special care in this war for ideas, is, as Wordsworth regretted, a pure flame but early in life. Things so soon happen to the tender child. There is his home, the mythology of his neighborhood, and the good or ill luck attending his labors, all going to his education. He is too intricate a creature for us to compel into wisdom, though we had it to offer, as though he were a horse simply obstinate over our pail of pure and kindly refreshment."



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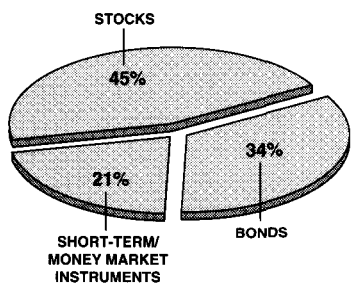

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REPORTS & COMMENT

NOTES

Intense

Reflections on a personality type

My wife and I were having lunch. She was talking. "What do my friends mean," she asked, "when they call me intense?"

I didn't know what to answer at first, not because I didn't know what she was talking about but because I knew so perfectly that it was hard to put into words.

My wife is five feet tall. Of the pocket dictionary of pet names I have bestowed on her over the years, most of which have had a half-life of about a month, one was "bundle," short for "bundle of energy." When I think of her as a car, I think of a sports car, usually a Miata, red—or the cars in the cartoons I watched on TV as a kid, which walked down highways on tire feet, and had eyelashes over their headlights and grins for grillwork. If a pet squirrel accomplished anything by running around in a wheel—if the shaft of the wheel turned on a gas jet, which heated a tea kettle, whose steam floated a small parachute that brushed a light switch as it rose—and if the squirrel understood the process and desired the result, then my wife could be that squirrel.

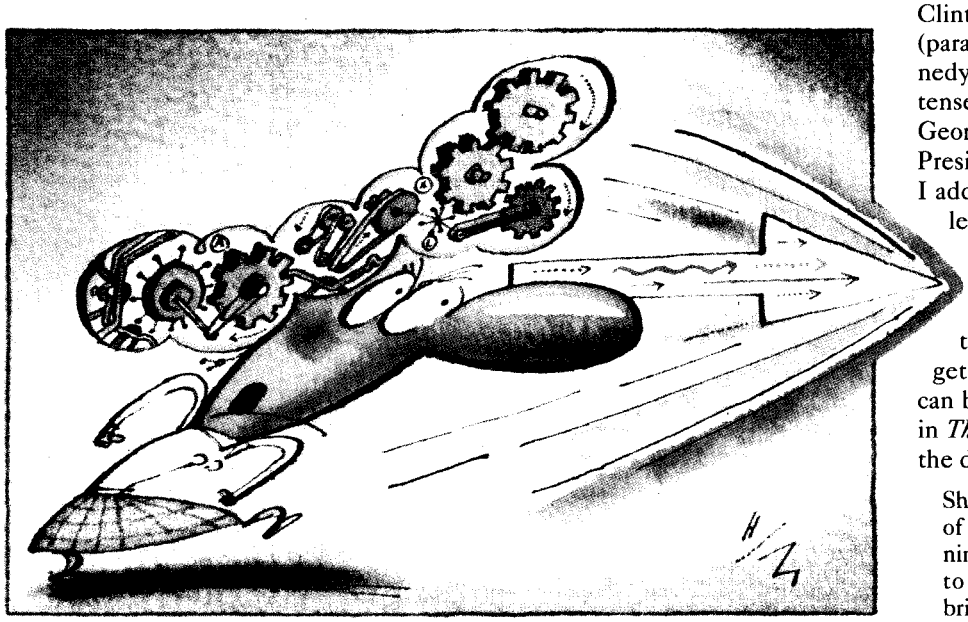
"Intense," I told my wife, was the word my pot-head friends used in college, in the seventies, when they were at that stage of being stoned in which they were fully conscious of the activities of the unstoned but lacked the desire or the capacity to participate in any way. When someone who was not stoned, usually me, did something, they would say, with a gravity that was exactly midway between satire and admiration (satire of anyone who would make such unseemly efforts, admiration for the ability to do so), "That's intense." What normal activity is to the stoned, the activity of those who are intense is to those who are normal.

I was not making any headway, so I decided to list intense people. "Hillary is intense," I said. "Bill is not." Our forty-second President: hand-pumper, hugger, hugger of the tree-hugger, smiler, glows with the flow, interested in a hundred policies, committed to about three. Resilient, intelligent, eager to please and be pleased—he is all these things. But he is not intense. The First Lady: author of articles in law journals, this year earning less money than her husband probably for the first time in her life, lived in Arkansas not because she was born there but because she chose to. She is intense. My wife began to see.

I went through other Presidents. Bush: not intense. Reagan: not intense. Carter: intense. Ford: come on. Nixon: so intense that he will probably live, on pure intensity, to give a sound bite at Clinton's funeral. Johnson: not intense (paradoxical—I'll get back to it). Kennedy: not intense. Eisenhower: very intense, though he pretended not to be. George Washington: the most intense President we have ever had. Goebbels, I added, was also intense, though Hitler was not. Lenin was intense, Trotsky was not. Madonna is intense, Marilyn was not.

My wife thought I was making things muddy again, but I was just getting rolling. Characters in fiction can be intense. Isabel Archer, the lady in *The Portrait of a Lady*, is intensity in the drawing room.

> She spent half her time in thinking of beauty, and bravery, and magnanimity; she had a fixed determination to regard the world as a place of brightness, of free expansion, of irre-



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sistible action; she thought it would be detestable to be afraid or ashamed.

Natty Bumppo, the friend of the eponymous character in *The Last of the Mohicans*, is intensity in the forest.

> He threw back a foot, and slowly raised the muzzle from the earth: the motion was steady, uniform, and in one direction. When on a perfect level, it remained for a single moment, without tremor or variation, as though both man and rifle were carved in stone. During that stationary instant, it poured forth its contents in a bright, glancing sheet of flame.

Bull's-eye. In the Karamazov family, Alyosha and Ivan are intense, which is why they spend so much time arguing about the Grand Inquisitor. Their relatives, for various reasons, are not.

"Give me explanations!" my wife howled. How intense of her, I thought. Here goes.

THE DEFINING quality of intense is that the motor never stops. The engine always runs, the battery always hums. Within the psychic boiler room of the intense person there is always at least a skeleton crew, and that crew never takes a break.

Intense cuts across such categories as good and evil, great and mediocre, success and failure, happiness and the lack of it. Jimmy Carter in office was decent, piddling, unsuccessful, and troubled, whereas Lenin was wicked, grand, triumphant, and possibly happy (he was known to laugh at the murder of his enemies). But from each man came the whir of wheels endlessly turning.

Activity, to be intense, must also be deliberate, directed, self-propelled. Intense requires an exercise of will. This is what distinguishes the achievements of the intense from those of the nonintense. Adolf Hitler, for example, accomplished a great deal. He left the world not a better place but certainly a very different one. Yet we know from the accounts of his colleagues that Hitler's motor often stopped. He got up late in the morning; he was subject to bouts of inaction or inattention. He thought of himself as having an artistic temperament. The furies that issued from him were distillations of his character, which he could no more alter than he could change his hair color by thinking about it. This thoughtless quality characterizes other busy but not intense types—Lyndon Johnson, William F. Buckley Jr., Francis of Assisi. Even when they seem to be consciously choosing, their choices are driven by uncontrollable personal forces (in Johnson's case, ambition and grievance). Their activity is an exfoliation of their natures. They do not do, they are.

This alternative to intense may be called narcissistic. Another way of not being intense is to be depressive. While the narcissist has no need of will, since his actions occur spontaneously, the depressive would like very much to summon some but can rarely manage it. His failures leave him in a condition of stasis. Being depressive is not the same as being depressed. Intense can also get depressed, whenever the will is exercised ineffectively or inefficiently, and when that happens, intense takes it hard. When the depressive gets depressed, which is often, he implodes, silently. Samuel Johnson, one of the great depressives, spent several years on the edge of a nervous breakdown, with no one knowing but his closest friends. When intense gets depressed, the whole world hears about it.

The intense have complicated relations with their fellows. Toward the depressive intense usually feels mildly patronizing or, if love softens him, sympathetic. For a narcissist he may feel confused admiration, mistakenly seeing a fellow busy bee who has somehow shucked off the burdens of effort. These attitudes never last. Sooner or later the depressive or the narcissist lets intense down, usually by failing to meet some obligation—the depressive out of inability, the narcissist because it hasn't registered. Then intense reacts with indignation and scorn. Bertrand Russell, a twenty-four-karat narcissist, recorded in his essay "Eminent Men I Have Known" that the most impressive (read "intense") public man he ever met was Gladstone, with whom he had an after-dinner drink of port when he was seventeen and Gladstone was eighty.

> For a long time we sat in silence; at last, in his booming bass voice, he condescended to make his one and only remark: "This is very good port they've given me, but why have they given it me in a claret-glass?" Since then I have faced infuriated mobs, angry judges, and hostile governments, but never again have I felt such terror.

Depressives are better able to put up with this kind of treatment at the hands of the intense. (They are good at putting up with things generally, since they are unable to do anything else.) Intense nags them, goads them, rarely lets them alone, and even when he is not actively on their case, they feel the draft generated by the breeze of his bustle. But since a will of their own is something they would dearly like to have, they regard the intense with helpless yearning. Narcissists pay as much attention to the intense as they pay to anything else, which in the normal course of things is none, though when intense grows indignant over some (to narcissists) imaginary failing, they respond with incomprehension.

ARE THE INTENSE ever happy? As often as anyone else in this world. Narcissists are happy when they shine; depressives are happy when the world shines around them. The intense are happy when coming down the home stretch. Do the intense ever rest? Never.

The intense are found in almost all walks of life. Generals: Caesar. Saints: Thomas Aquinas. Athletes: Ted Williams. Only a few fields are free of them. Pop stars, who work in the two-dimensional realm of iconography, tend to be narcissists. Madonna is the exception to the exception, but she needed to be intense in order to become an icon without much in the way of looks or talent.

Intensity is unevenly distributed among nations, however. France is intense. So is Ireland. So is Spain. The journalist Luigi Barzini wrote that when the Spaniards marched into Italy in their black garments in 1529, the Italians in their gaily colored silks looked at each other and thought, *There goes the Renaissance.* (If they had been dopers, they would have said, *Com'è intense.*) But are Italians more intense than they let on? Certainly ancient Romans were intense. Where did their intensity go? If Barzini is right, it went into strenuous efforts to keep up appearances. So every demonstration of Italian style and skill, from a Milanese designer's designs to a waiter's smoothing of a tablecloth, is an example not of irrepressible *joie de vivre* but of tireless effort.

Japanese: what do you think? Koreans: even more intense—they survived Japanese occupation. Ancient Greeks:

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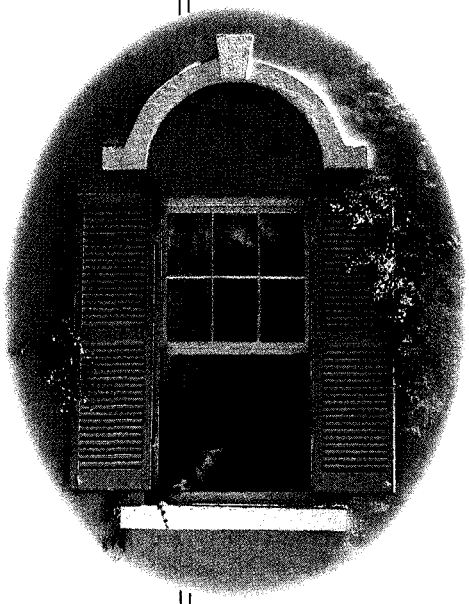

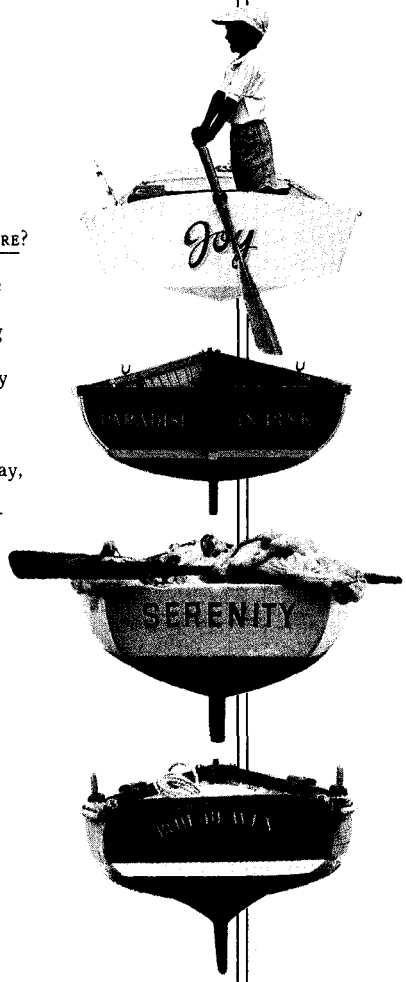

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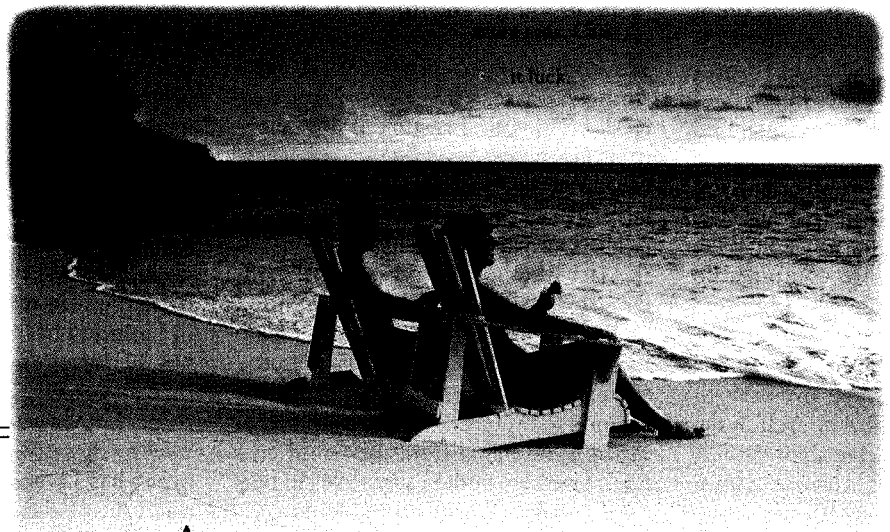

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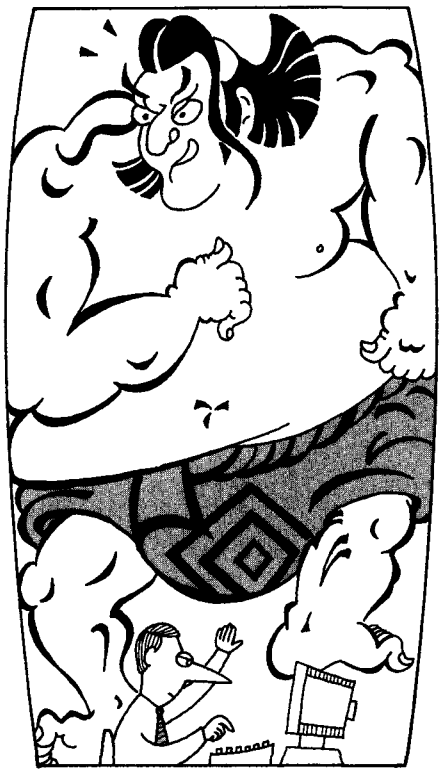
brilliant narcissists (they invented Narcissus). Jews: intense, except when they escape all those commandments. Trotsky was a narcissist; so was Benjamin Disraeli, unless, like the Italians, he was simply acting. Russians are depressives. So are Germans, whose moments of efficiency are only moods. So are the British, except for a beleaguered puritanical minority, to which Margaret Thatcher happens to belong. The most intense people in England, by and large, came here on the *Mayflower*.

Would they come here today? It is pretty clear that America is becoming less intense, and that narcissists and depressives multiply apace. Americans once disciplined their feelings. Now they get in touch with them. A culture that was molded by the *Bay Psalm Book* and *Poor Richard's Almanack* yearns for the day when it will be able to amuse itself with 300 cable stations, some of them adapted for virtual reality. Our drift from intense can be measured by comparing the last few Presidents with the first. George Washington, who had a tremendous temper but is said to have lost it only once in public, whose public monument in the nation's capital is not a statue or even a real building but a 555-foot-tall marlin spike, would be lucky today if he could join the White House honor guard.

Which has nothing to do with virtue or happiness. Poets, mystics, vintners, people who savor Earth and go to Heaven, are all found outside the ranks of the intense. But the struggles of nations, especially in a commercial age, seem to favor nations whose people have strong wills, which is what keeps the light bulbs shining over the heads and in the workplace. That, anyway, is the kind of success America has had—a kind it seems increasingly unqualified to pursue.

But forgetting your country, are you intense? This is the sort of question no one can ever answer for himself. Each of us thinks he is more complicated than anyone else does, possibly more complicated than anyone actually is. Walker Percy (deep depressive) once noted that anyone reading an astrological column can recognize himself in the descriptions for all twelve signs. So it is with the intense—and with the narcissistic and the depressive. If you want to know which you are, ask a friend. If you do, you are probably intense.

—Richard Brookhiser



TOKYO

Fine, Thank You

Japan's economy, rather than being the cripple the press calls it, is set to resume its remarkable growth rate

EVER SINCE the Tokyo stock market entered a prolonged depression in January of 1990, the American press has been reporting fresh economic disasters almost daily from Japan.

Many influential people in the United States have come to accept that Japan is in a painful economic slump. In the last week of the presidential campaign, when George Bush contended that Japan's economic difficulties were more serious than those of the United States, nobody in the American press seemed to disagree. Yet the truth is that Japan is emerging from the world economic malaise of the early 1990s in better shape than any other major industrial nation.

Perhaps the most telling indicator of Japan's underlying economic health is personal income. Since 1988 the Japanese have moved from third to second place in world per capita income. According to Jesper Koll, a German economist in the Tokyo office of S. G. Warburg Securities, Japan's per capita income finished last year at $29,100—just 12 percent behind the longtime income leaders, the Swiss, and a stunning 42 percent ahead of Americans. Koll's numbers show that the Japanese economy ended last year fully 72 percent as large as the U.S. economy, up from 37 percent when Ronald Reagan took office twelve years ago.

Most other important economic indicators tell a story of similar strength:

- Japan's unemployment rate is just 2.4 percent—about a third the U.S. rate. Japan's unemployment is lower now than it was in the boom year of 1988.
- Wage increases negotiated under Japan's pay-bargaining system averaged 4.9 percent last year, bringing a significant rise in living standards in a country where the cost of living has risen 1.2 percent in the past year.
- Japanese corporations have been far more successful at increasing sales than their American competitors—particularly sales of cars but also of electronics and computers. Reports of a successful American rebuff of the Japanese challenge in personal computers omit that most "American" products rely on Japanese parts and technology and many are not assembled in the United States.
- According to the Tokyo-based economist Kenneth Courtis, Japan's flourishing house-building industry has recently been building more houses than its American counterpart—for a population just half that of the United States. Sales are brisk at prices three to five times American levels.
- Courtis predicts that Japan's trade surplus will grow to $160 billion this year, a 20 percent jump over last year's record $132 billion. This would be nearly four times the surplus on the eve of the 1985 Plaza Accord, which the Reagan Administration presented as the solution to trade imbalances.
- A 30 percent increase in the value of the yen against the dollar, which the influential Massachusetts Institute of Technology economist Rudiger Dornbusch has advocated to bring America's trade into balance, would push Japan past the United States to become the world's biggest economy.

(Continued on page 35)

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arts & ENTERTAINMENT

MAY 1993 • THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY • INSIDE: SHAKESPEARE IN SPACE • SUMMER MOVIES FOR KIDS • VINTAGE BROADWAY ON CD • EAST EUROPEAN FILMS ON VIDEO • HAS PHILIP GLASS BECOME A ROMANTIC? • *THE SEARCH FOR SIGNS OF INTELLIGENT LIFE* IN VIRGINIA • THE ULTIMATE RECITAL HALL • THE LATEST IN JAZZ GUITAR • MUSIC FROM THE RAIN FOREST

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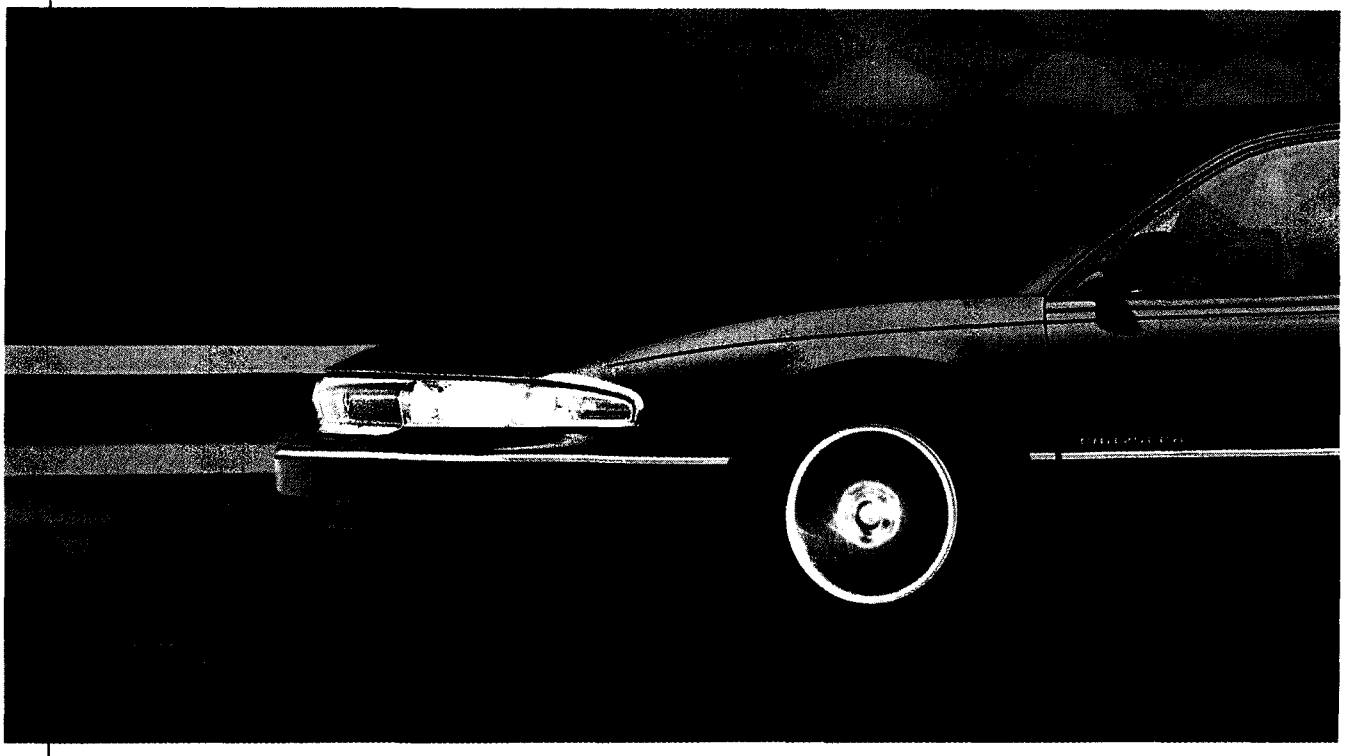

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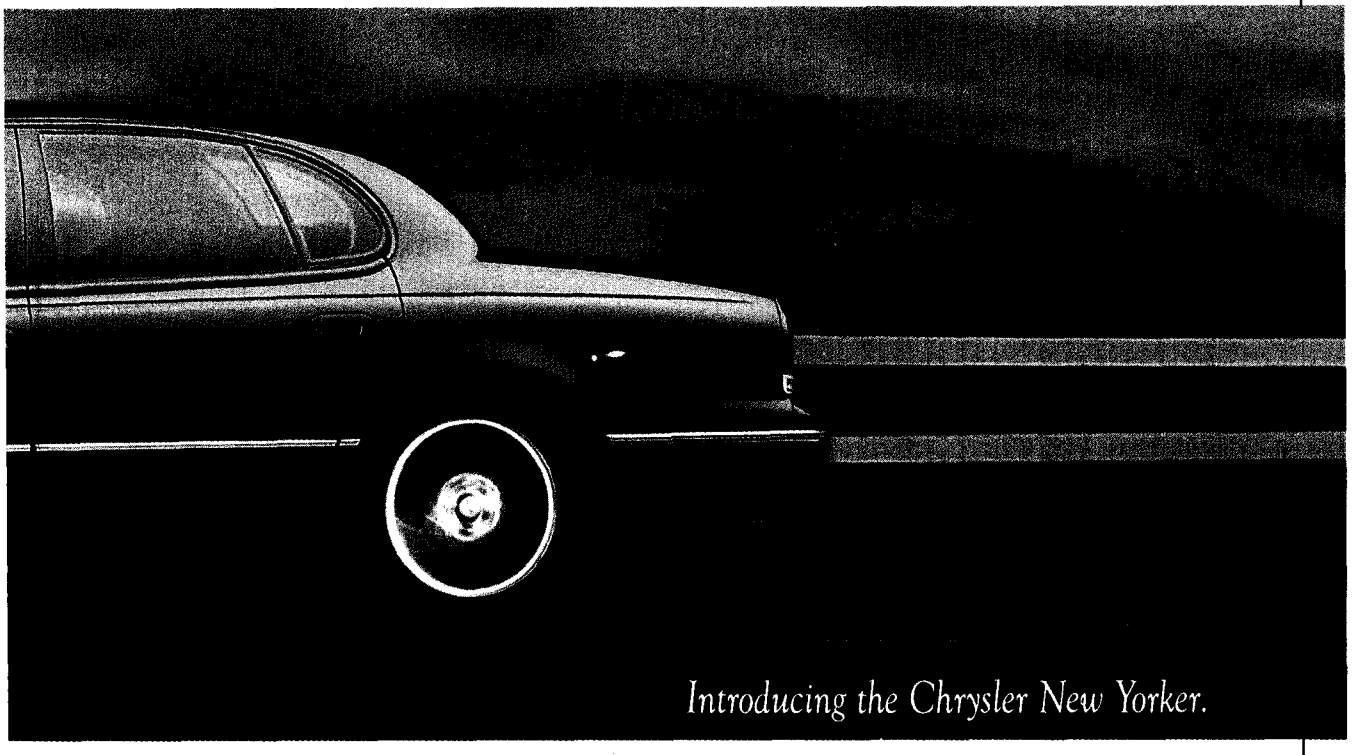

little personal meaning until you get inside this car and take it for what will be a truly eye-opening test drive. You can do that at your local Chrysler dealer. For information, call 1-800-4A-CHRYSLER. (For a boat, visit your local marina.)

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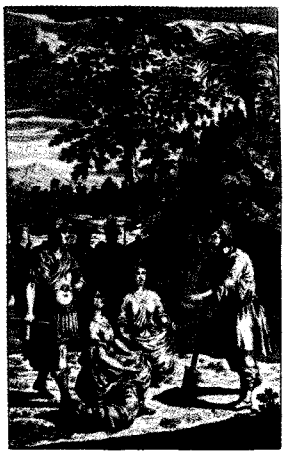
THEATER

by Austin Baer

SHAKESPEARE IN THE ROUGH

Timon of Athens has been called the stillborn twin of *Lear*, a label not apt to attract much interest. Scholars believe that Shakespeare left it unfinished, which is one more reason to pass it by. But like the rugged *Slaves* of Michelangelo, which are unfinished too and nonetheless make a potent showing in the gallery they share with the polished *David*, *Timon* has a grandeur of its own. True enough, the plot is sketchy. A lord of untold wealth loses all, his friends desert him, and he withdraws to a cave, where the rest of his brief life is consumed principally in cursing mankind. But a scene like Timon's last banquet, in which he serves "smoke and lukewarm water," has the hallucinatory pictorial clarity of a parable. Both in brief phrases (at the aforementioned banquet, "Uncover, dogs, and lap") and in great cascades of hate, the language fulminates. Among those who have felt its power, count Vladimir Nabokov, who mined it in his novel *Pale Fire*. The Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, which for 11 years has been presenting an annual tribute to Shaw in tandem with a thematically related work not by Shaw, this month presents *Timon*, its first Shakespeare, in repertory with *The Millionairess*. A reach? Not really. "Both plays," explains Montgomery Davis, the artistic director, "are about power and money."



An engraving, 1709 edition

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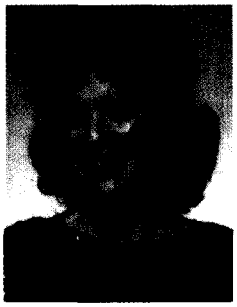
ALL THE GALAXY'S A STAGE

Phillip DePoy, director and composer-in-residence at the Theatrical Outfit, in Atlanta, cannot say the name of his company's next show without cracking up. It's *The Merchant of Venus*, adapted from you-know-what, by you-know-who. "But it's more than just a funny name!" he hastens to add. "It is Shakespeare! We didn't rewrite!" Shakespeare's *Merchant* has numerous songs. This one has several more. DePoy, the merry perpetrator also of a musical of *Hamlet*, explains: "Songs help point up the story and create the mood. They're adapted from dialogue." Okay, but why Venus? "Watching PBS one day, I heard someone say that for Shakespeare, Renaissance Italy was like outer space is for us: a place where anything can happen, so you can write your own rules. Venus, appropriately named for the goddess of love, is a place for characters motivated by peace, love, and understanding. Shylock and Jessica are from Earth (they'll wear space suits), and like many earth people, they're motivated by greed and revenge. Venusians don't know or care about religion—so anti-Semitism isn't an issue." Hm. How about no rewriting? "Well, our Shylock says, 'I am a human. Hath not a human eyes? Hath he not hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? . . . If you prick us, do we not bleed?'" And the musical style? "Radical spiritual eclecticism! But lyrical, and full of earth music. The Venusians get our radio waves, and they really dig our music."

LIFE AFTER LILY

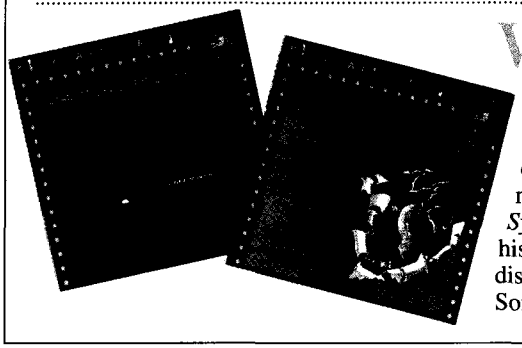
Trudy, the bag lady, is having a hard time getting her space chums to understand the difference between soup and art. She shows them a can of Campbell's soup. She shows them an Andy Warhol painting of cans of Campbell's soup. And still they don't get it. For more than two years, in Los Angeles and on Broadway, Lily Tomlin described their puzzlement and much, much more in Jane Wagner's *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*. Alone on stage, Tomlin portrayed a whole gallery of Americans of all ages, mostly women, but some men, too, caught up in the tribulations of their ingeniously interlocking contemporary lives. Performance art, women's support groups, transcendental trout-fishing, love in the eighties, a what-the-hell instance of artificial insemination by turkey baster—Tomlin never had richer material for her wild precision satire. So powerful is her precedent that one might suppose no one else would ever dare approach Wagner's script again, but that would be to underestimate the bravado of the born performer. Mimi Wyche, who performs the play at the Mill Mountain Theatre, in Roanoke, Virginia, this month, is both scared and elated at the challenge. "I thought when I saw Lily Tomlin, I hope one day to be able to do something like that—but I didn't know the rights were available. When I first saw the play I thought, These characters are Lily. Then when I read it, I realized that I want to explore them too."



Mimi Wyche

COURTESY OF MIMI WYCHE

BROADWAY SENDS ITS REGARDS



COURTESY OF ANGEL RECORDS

When the compact disc hit the market, about a decade ago, vintage Broadway musicals did not strike the record companies as high priorities for reissue. Happily, some of the majors are coming to their senses. Welcome back Cole Porter, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Rodgers and Hart, Meredith Willson, Leonard Bernstein, the young Sondheim! From Sony come the classic Columbia cast albums and soundtracks of *Candide*, *My Fair Lady*, *Kiss Me, Kate!*, *On the Town*, *West Side Story*, and lots more. Angel is striking back with the likes of *Carousel*, *The King and I*, *The Boys from Syracuse*, *Can-Can*, *Funny Girl*, *The Music Man*, and *Follies*. Each label has a now-historic *Pal Joey*, and how are we supposed to choose? In the age of the 70-minute-plus disc and the multidisc set, many of these albums may seem to fail the value-for-dollar test. Some whiz by in a mere 40 minutes. But that's 40 minutes of bliss.

COVER IMAGE: *IN THE BOX*, 1879, MARY CASSATT (1844–1926). PRIVATE COLLECTION. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART.

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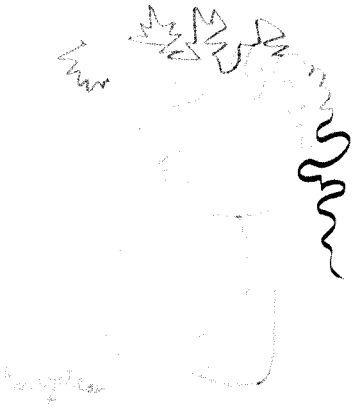
CLASSICAL MUSIC

by Austin Baer

ORPHEE GETS A NEW LOOK



COURTESY OF THE SEVERIN WUNDERMAN MUSEUM

Cocteau's *Orphée à la lyre*

Once upon a time, movies were the end of the adaptation line. ("No, I didn't read the book, but I saw the play." "No, I didn't see the play, but I saw the movie.") Now that we have had Fellini's silver-screen *81/2* retooled (splendidly) as Broadway's *Nine*, it should not surprise us that Cocteau's *Orphée* is about to be reborn as Philip Glass's, staged for the American Repertory Theatre, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, by Francesca Zambello, American opera's director of the hour, with designs by Robert Israel. In a way, Israel's job is the hardest. The photorealism of film would seem—would it not?—to preempt all the decisions a written playscript leaves to the imagination. In fact, Israel has gone his own way. His solution for Cocteau's retelling of the classic myth of love beyond the grave has a great conceptual elegance. It is also thoroughly theatrical. "There's this world," says Israel, "and there's the other world. In this world we see fronts of flats—the artifice of theater. In the other world, we see backs of flats, with all the framing and jacks. To specify locations, we might use a table, a fireplace, a chandelier. . . . As in the movie, there's a radio that is important. And a mirror. We also have ambiguous mixtures of the two worlds, achieved with shadows and silhouettes." And what about the music? Will audiences acquainted with Glass's Egyptian, Indian, Einsteinian, and other operas hear any difference? Israel, Glass's frequent collaborator, thinks they will. "I find this score particularly French," he says, "which surprised me. I think Philip's work has been getting progressively more romantic. And the second act has what I can only assume are arias!"

A PERFECT MATCH

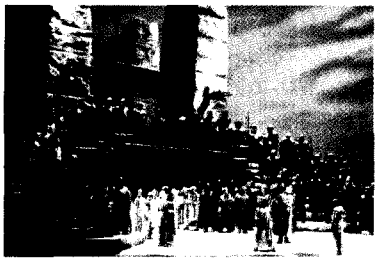
For an idea of what the Emerson Quartet has to offer in its 15th-anniversary season, you cannot do better than try its new recording *American Originals*, with string quartets of Charles Ives and Samuel Barber (Deutsche Grammophon). Ranging from moments of Shaker serenity to episodes that are furiously disputatious, the program bears witness to communicative powers as noteworthy for finesse as for drama, as persuasive in wit as in solemnity. Other leading quartets have been known to purchase such expressivity at the cost of technical exactitude, but these four American originals excel technically, too. The beauty of tone never fails, yet it never cloys, for the palette of sound is as limitless as the music wants it to be. It seems as if nothing could go wrong, yet the music tingles with immediacy. The Emerson's is a most dynamic balance of virtues. This month, the quartet plays in Urbana, Hartford, New York City (Alice Tully Hall), and New London before departing for the Festival d'Evian in southern France for all-Russian programs with Mstislav Rostropovich, mentor of the Emerson's cellist. A simultaneous recording is in prospect. It will make a handsome addition to the quartet's splendid Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Dvořák, Debussy, and Ravel recordings (all Deutsche Grammophon).

CHRISTIAN STEINER

The Emerson Quartet

THE FINAL CURTAIN AND AFTER

May Day is mayday at the Metropolitan Opera. Violetta coughs her last at the noontime matinee of *La Traviata*, and at midnight, the world goes up in flames in *Götterdämmerung*, the season's grand finale. But it is not the end after all. On May 9, the deluxe Metropolitan Opera orchestra and its music director, James Levine, pay a visit to Carnegie Hall for an all–Alban Berg program. The creamy-toned Renée Fleming sings excerpts from the operas *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, usually done by spikier sopranos. The Violin Concerto, a work of distilled romantic anguish, is in the hands of the sophisticated Anne-Sophie Mutter. The next weekend, L'Opéra Français de New York (212-678-0548) offers Chabrier's operetta in excelsis *L'Étoile*. The tale links the destiny of a poor street peddler with that of his sovereign, King Ouf the First. A trifle, yes, but the score blends the sparkle of Offenbach, the charm of Bizet, and a dash of the sensuality of Wagner for a cocktail that goes straight to the head.



WINNIE KLOTZ

Götterdämmerung

And on May 26, PBS airs Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, directed by the renowned puppeteer Julie Taymor. Jessye Norman sings Jocasta, the queen for whom the phrase "wife and mother" takes on shades of horror. The production is from the Saito Kinen Festival, a pet project of conductor Seiji Ozawa. Such was the crush for lodging at the event that Norman vacated her suite for the Emperor.

DISCS FIT FOR A CZAR

Singers of Imperial Russia (Pearl, distributed by Koch International): four volumes, each with three well-filled compact discs of opera stars you never heard of from such locales as pre-Revolutionary St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Warsaw. . . . All this seems, on the face of it, rather a lot of a dubious thing. Well, one must make allowance for the sound. Surface noise lies on some tracks like a trace of dust, on others like dark, thick layers of cracking varnish. But how thrilling the voices are that call out across the chasm of the years! What vibrant personalities! Not to mention how much unfamiliar, haunting music they sing. And occasional salvos of enthusiasm from studio listeners make it feel as if one were back in the room when the artists sang straight into the horn. Here is a treasure trove, indeed.

Austin Baer is a writer living in New York.

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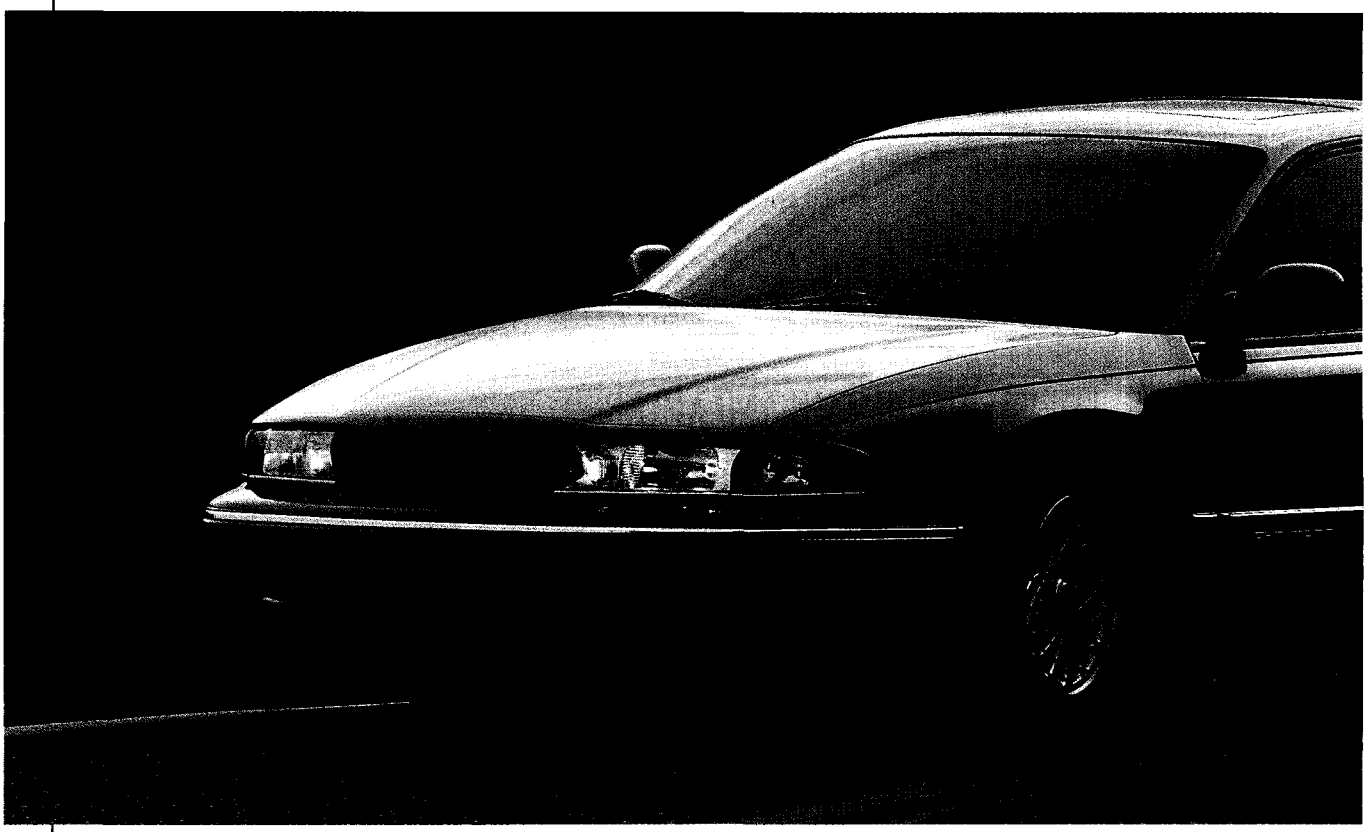
There was a time when luxury car owners wanted to encapsulate themselves in a living room on wheels, point themselves down the highway, and be awakened when they arrived at their destination. Fortunately, these days, more and more

The new generation of luxury
old one didn't



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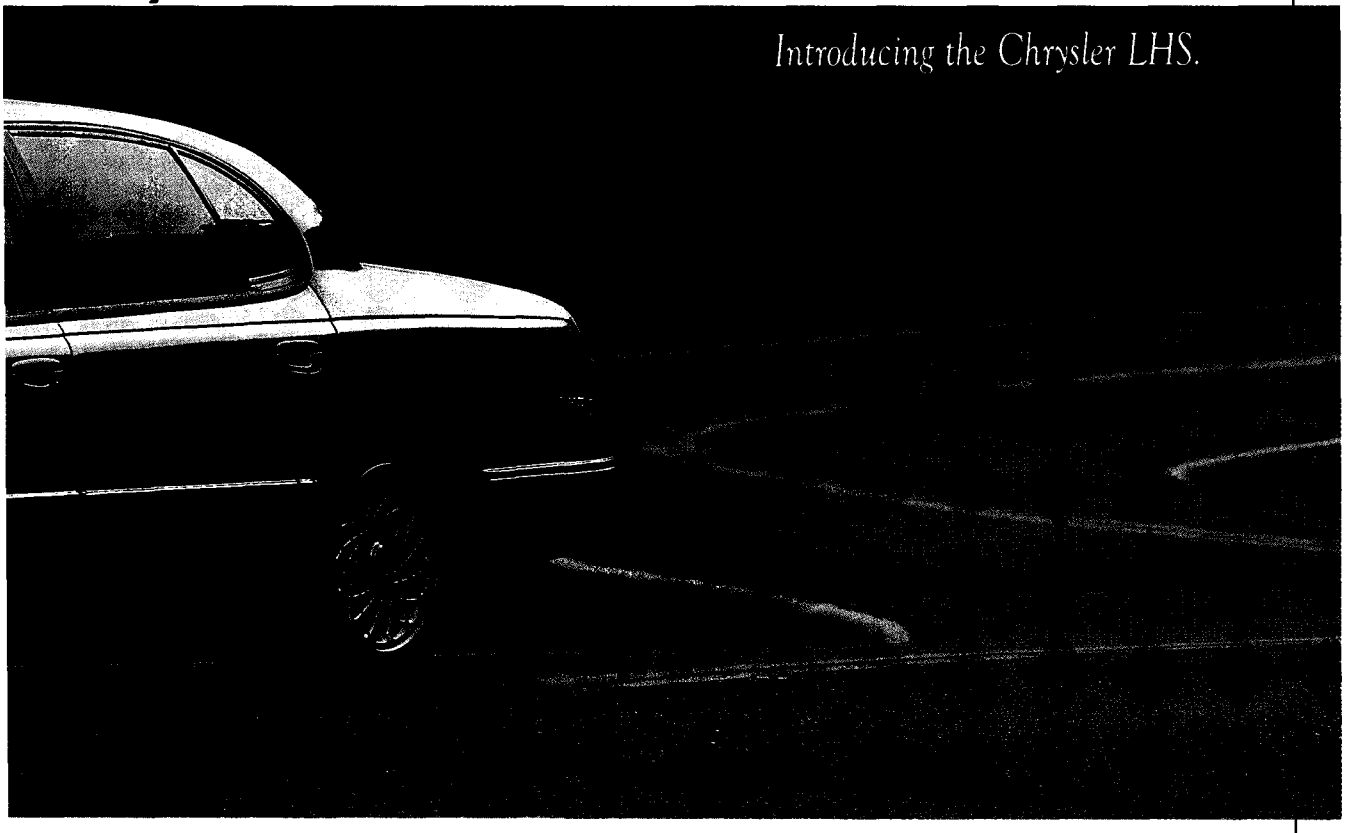
"cab forward" design provides immense interior room. While giving the car a wide track for tight, stable handling. Four-wheel independent suspension allows you to straighten tight hairpins with authority. And a 24-valve,

:ar buyer does something the
They drive.



214-horsepower engine satisfies your craving for power. In short, this luxury car will put you back in touch with one of the chief joys of owning a car. In case you've forgotten, it's called driving. For more information, call 1-800-4A-CHRYSLER.

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POPULAR MUSIC

by Charles M. Young

RICHARD THOMPSON'S SONGS FROM THE DARK SIDE

PAUL L. KOVIT

Richard Thompson, *Watching the Dark*

Boxed sets tend to be most useful in the case of musicians whose artistic success hasn't been matched by commensurate commercial success. Such artists tend to have their work scattered over several labels, and if a fan discovers them late, it is dismaying to find large gaps in the available back catalogue. Important albums go out of print and "greatest hits" collections usually just cover the output of one label, making them decidedly spotty. And when an artist hasn't had real hits, who's to decide which are greatest? Some MBA in a suit.

Richard Thompson, an English folkie who has transcended his genre to the point of being beyond classification, has built a reputation as a spectacular guitar hero who makes almost no reference to rock or blues. He is also a smart and funny songwriter whose pessimism has limited his pop appeal. To listen to Thompson is to be reminded of a fundamental musical truth: when you feel bad, it feels good to play the guitar. And Thompson feels bad a lot, apparently seeing in relationships mostly their potential for betrayal.

So despite a fanatically loyal following, he hasn't sold millions of records, and it's hard to find much of his past work. Rykodisc/Hannibal has decided to remedy this situation with the aptly titled *Watching the Dark*, a three-CD collection that clocks in at over three and a half hours, and it's hard to find a boring moment in all 47 songs.

Where many boxed sets start with early songs on which the musician can barely play, and which lose all interest after one hearing, the chronicle of *Watching the Dark: The History of Richard Thompson* starts with the third album of Thompson's first significant band, Fairport Convention. Thompson had already mastered his instrument, creating the impression here that he was born a virtuoso and just stayed that way. The only thing that's really changed has been the lead vocalist: the exquisite Sandy Denny in Fairport Convention, his almost as exquisite ex-wife, Linda Thompson, and Richard Thompson himself, who is not an exquisite singer. His rumbling baritone has a limited range, but in folk music this has the advantage of making him sound like an actual folk.

It is difficult to pick out highlights in a uniform sea of excellence. One is constantly astonished by the sheer breadth of musicianship. On a long electric solo like "Can't Win," his imagination is reminiscent of Jimi Hendrix. On a quiet acoustic number like "Shepherd's March/Maggie Cameron" his guitar has the depth of a chamber orchestra. He's also capable of a pure lighthearted joke, like "Hokey Pokey" (enhanced by a delightful fiddle). But mostly we hear emotional catharsis ("When the Spell Is Broken," "Wall of Death") in a world offering little escape from suffering, except in the song itself.

ALL THE LATEST RAVE

Now that "techno" has sprouted in the United States, a few years after originating in Manchester, England, we are hearing about huge "rave" parties, put on guerrilla-style in warehouses and ranches where the participants can take Ecstasy, LSD, and nitrous oxide to enhance the high of marathon dance sessions. Characterized by a mechanical beat slightly faster than disco, techno acts directly on the adrenal glands. It is almost impossible to listen to good techno and not turn into an aerobic dervish. On top of the beat, keyboards pound out simple, highly repetitive melodies that turn off the logical processes of the brain and induce a state of trance. Periodically the DJ will interrupt with an irreverent comment about drugs, politics, or religion.

COURTESY OF ARISTA

L.A. Style

The first techno single to break the *Billboard* Top 100—after hitting #4 on the Dance Charts—was "James Brown Is Dead," by L.A. Style, now available on their first, self-titled album on Arista. The title is typical of the outrageous sentiments one hears in this genre. The album goes from song to song without pause, just like a rave party, and Denzil Slemming, the Dutch musician/producer who serves as impresario of L.A. Style, brings considerable variety to the half-rapped, half-chanted vocals. Even if you don't plan to attend a rave, you'll find L.A. Style useful for cleaning the bathroom in half your regular time.

PYGMY RHYTHMS

COURTESY OF HOUGHTON MIFFLIN

One of the underappreciated joys of music appreciation is discovering new genres and giving their mysteries a chance to unfold gradually. It is a process easier than, but similar to, practicing an instrument, and the experience can be as intense as religious conversion. Take the case of Louis Sarno, who gave up normal life in the United States to live with and record the Ba-Benjellé Pygmies. Like all native peoples of the rain forest, the Ba-Benjellé live in peril of extinction, as their environment is degraded by the relentless onslaughts of the modern world. In *Song from the Forest: My Life Among the Ba-Benjellé Pygmies* (Houghton Mifflin), Sarno describes his deep love for these people, as individuals and for the sheer aesthetic ecstasy their intricate choral music provides. Unfortunately the soundtrack for this wonderful book is available only from England (Henry Targowski, 16 Langridge, Rhyl Street, London NW5 4LY) at this writing. Those interested in the music of other endangered peoples should try *The Spirit Cries: Music from the Rainforests of South America & the Caribbean* (Rykodisc). Produced by Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart from field recordings compiled by the Library of Congress, *Spirit* opens up new vistas of music and pure rhythm to "civilized" ears and makes the prospect of the extinction (some are already extinct) of these tribes unbearably sad. Happily their music will live on, adding an urgent aesthetic dimension to the efforts to save them.

Charles M. Young is the executive editor of Musician *magazine.*

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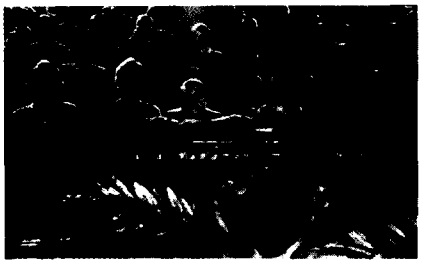
FILM

by Ella Taylor

REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST



The Long Day Closes

Jacquot

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

You may remember Terence Davies's 1989 film *Distant Voices, Still Lives*, a somberly gorgeous fictionalized memoir of his childhood in a northern English working-class family tyrannized by a sporadically abusive father. Davies's latest film works the same territory, only now the father has disappeared, leaving a serene family untroubled by its poverty, and presided over by the mother Davies unabashedly adored. *The Long Day Closes* is Davies's happy acceptance of the way memory fashions its own history, picking out tiny fragments of everyday life and lifting them into rhapsody. *The Long Day Closes* is a lovely, unhurried mood piece that catches perfectly the texture of life in late-1950s England, its rain-sodden inner-city drabness lit up by a hodgepodge of BBC radio comedies, American pop songs, and old movies. The same loving feel for detail is evident in *Jacquot*, French director Agnès Varda's reconstruction of the childhood of her late husband, Jacques Demy (*The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*), who began making films in the garage of his Nantes home as a teenager. But though it's beautifully shot in black and white alternating with color and juxtaposed with clips from Demy's movies, *Jacquot* could use some of Davies's gift for artful selection. Relying on Demy's memories—every last one, it sometimes seems—*Jacquot* loses in magic what it gains in completeness.

SLEEPY, SNEEZY, HUCK, DENNIS, AND MARIO

As we move toward summer the schedules fill up with children's films. Disney got off to an early start in April with a fetching mix of classic and pop. *The Adventures of Huck Finn* stars Elijah Wood as Twain's puckish lad and Courtney B. Vance as his runaway-slave pal Jim, with Robbie Coltrain and Jason Robards as the con men who sell Jim, as it were, down the river. Parents still recovering from the first great Nintendo wave may hesitate to expose their offspring to *Super Mario Bros.*, though the film has a great cast, headed by Bob Hoskins and John Leguizamo as the plumbers. Later in the summer Disney will re-release that homage to hand-washing and Calvinism, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Warner Bros. also has a full summer slate for children, including my favorite children's story, *The Secret Garden*. Who better than Agnieszka Holland (*Europa Europa* and *Olivier Olivier*) to direct this dark tale of loneliness (though she may have a little trouble with the redemptive ending)? Going downmarket a few notches, John Hughes (*Home Alone Once Too Often*) wrote and produced *Dennis the Menace*, starring Walter Matthau, Christopher Lloyd, and, of all people, Joan Plowright. Not to be outdone, Miramax, flushed with the success of *Enchanted April* and *The Crying Game*, ventures into family filmmaking with *Into the West*: Mike Newell (*Enchanted April*) directs this "Western for the nineties" about two children roaming the Irish countryside with a stolen horse. Gabriel Byrne and Ellen Barkin generate a little adult electricity as their father and his girlfriend.

Snow White et al.

WALT DISNEY PICTURES

Ella Taylor is a film critic for L.A. Weekly.

WEST, MEET EAST

If East European filmmaking continues to dry up as government funding vanishes, at least some of its great works will survive in the West, thanks to the library of East European cinema collected over 25 years by the International Film Exchange.

Among the first of the nearly 40 titles to be released on videocassette by the New York–based distributor Kino (800-562-3330) is Sergei Eisenstein's *Que Viva Mexico*, his unfinished epic poem to the Mexican people, assembled in 1979 by the director's editor Grigory Alexandrov. Andrei Tarkovsky's 1975 *The Mirror*, a memoir of his childhood in exile, will be released along with Michal Leszczylowski's 1988 documentary about Tarkovsky's work on his last film, *The Sacrifice*. Nikita Mikhalkov, who directed this year's lovely *Close to Eden*, adapted his 1981 *Oblomov* from Ivan Goncharov's novel. One of the few Soviet films about Jewish life, *Commissar* is a riveting if ingenuously folksy story about a hulking Red Army commander whose unwanted pregnancy forces her into retreat in the house of a Jewish peasant family. Made in 1967 by Alexander Askoldov, a Gentile, the film was banned by the Soviet government, but a forgotten print resurfaced after *glasnost*.

The latest video release from Kultur International (908-229-2343) is a newly discovered original print of Sergei Bondarchuk's fabulous *War and Peace*, more than six hours long and with the dubbing of the 1960s version replaced by subtitles. If all this kultur weighs you down, Kultur also brings you *Errol Flynn: Portrait of a Swashbuckler*, in which the actor's love life makes his screen exploits look like afternoon tea at your local nunnery.

A SOCIAL STUDY

Romper Stomper, Geoffrey Wright's febrile view-from-within of an Australian neo-Nazi subculture, stars Russell Crowe (unrecognizable from his last role as the amiably feckless dishwasher in Jocelyn Moorhouse's *Proof*) as a young skinhead whose gang is locked in a vicious struggle with Melbourne's Asian community. Though its hyperkinetic brutality makes the film hard to watch at times, *Romper Stomper* is a compelling—and timely—study of how grinding deprivation can turn the working class not to solidarity but to nationalism, racial hatred, and self-destruction.

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JAZZ

by Bob Blumenthal

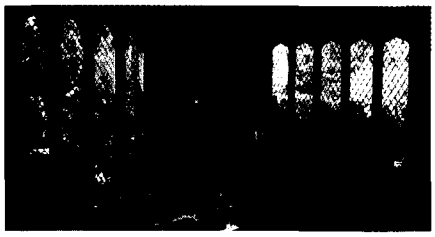
WHEN WES IS MORE

Guitarist Wes Montgomery's seven years in the limelight contained measures of artistic and commercial achievement rarely equalled in jazz. His early recordings instantly made Montgomery's rapid single lines, and even more amazing octaves and chords, influential. The heavily orchestrated projects that preceded his death, in 1968, dominated the pop charts.

The full measure of Montgomery the jazz giant can be heard on the boxed set *Wes Montgomery: The Complete Riverside Recordings* (Riverside). These 12 compact discs, containing almost everything he recorded between 1959 and '63, find the guitarist spinning keenly structured and emotionally direct solos with a balance of lyricism and audacious technique that suggests the breadth of his appeal. Most of the settings—studio quartets and quintets, the organ trio Montgomery led in his native Indianapolis, sideman and co-leader encounters with the likes of Milt Jackson and Cannonball Adderley, even a with-strings session of substance—leave the space for extended solos that his later Grammy-winning efforts lacked. More modest portions of the Riverside catalogue remain available as Fantasy/Original Jazz Classic CDs. Among the best of the OJCs are *The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery*, with pianist Tommy Flanagan; *Full House*, a live blowing session featuring Johnny Griffin's tenor sax; and *Groove Yard*, in which Wes is joined by brothers Monk (electric bass) and Buddy (piano and vibes).

ALBUM COVERS COURTESY OF RIVERSIDE

DISCOVERING JAZZ-PIANO PARADISE



Maybeck Recital Hall

JIM GUDEMAN

Four years ago, pianist JoAnne Brackeen was so impressed with the Maybeck Recital Hall, in Berkeley, California, that she quickly arranged for Concord Jazz to record her solo concert there. Since then, Concord has collaborated with Maybeck's owners, Dick Whittington and Marilyn Ross, to record two dozen other pianists of various generations and styles, and the resulting Live at Maybeck series has become an invaluable chronicle.

Hank Jones, Dave McKenna, Marian McPartland, Kenny Barron, and the others flourish in the intimacy of the hall, designed by Bernard Maybeck in 1914. The room's cathedral ceiling, which encloses two grand pianos, no more than 50 listeners, and no amplifiers, creates a clarity that recalls the studio of legendary jazz engineer Rudy Van Gelder.

The most recent Maybeck titles—Volume 24, by Polish Art Tatum disciple Adam Makowicz, and Volume 25, by hard-bop standard bearer Cedar Walton—suggest the diversity of the series, which has allowed such mainstays as John Hicks and Barry Harris to excel while also directing attention to less frequently heard talents like Walter Norris and Jessica Williams. Now Concord is redoubling its effort, launching a Maybeck duo series with a recording by pianist Roger Kellaway and the late bassist Red Mitchell.

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Your responses to the March A&E poll are pouring in. As we go to press, two films are virtually deadlocked for first place in the Best Picture category. Watch for next month's film page, where Ella Taylor will reveal the winners of the Readers' Choice Awards.

AVANT-GARDE GUITAR

Many of the best of the later jazz guitarists do their crossing over via fusion and the fruits of evolving guitar technology. John Abercrombie, for one, has shown a concern for enveloping sound washes that was only enhanced when he added the guitar synthesizer. Of late, Abercrombie has been swinging harder in a series of trio albums, of which *While We're Young* (ECM), with Dan Wall's flexible organ and Adam Nussbaum's limber drums, is one of the most successful. Avoiding the shrill railing that commonly afflicts the instrumentation, Abercrombie's organ trio glows from within.

John Scofield imposes a blues sensibility on everything he plays, although the range of rock, country/western, Latin, and bebop references that he incorporates into his tart and elliptical compositions reveals a contemporary perspective. The guitarist's working quartet of recent years has set the standard for telepathic interaction (especially between the leader and tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano) and a repertoire overflowing with both catchy hooks and challenging forms. *What We Do* (Blue Note), the band's third album, is another diverse program of infectious adventure.

Lovano and another guitar innovator, Bill Frisell, have worked together for more than a decade in the various groups of drummer Paul Motian. While these bands can take sonic liberties far removed from the introspective creations Motian helped fashion in the legendary Bill Evans trio, they have also displayed an irreverent affinity for jazz classics and show tunes. *Paul Motian on Broadway, Vol. III* (JMT) continues an excellent series of reimagined standards with the usual quartet (Charlie Haden on bass) plus Lee Konitz's alto and soprano saxes. Konitz's oblique inventions fold right into Lovano's grit, Frisell's levitations, and the low rumble of the rhythm section, making everything from "How Deep Is the Ocean?" to "Tico Tico" sound brand new.

Paul Motian

Bob Blumenthal is a jazz critic for The Boston Globe *and* CD Review.

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(Continued from page 24)

• According to the British economic historian Nicholas Crafts, the speed with which Japan's per capita income has outpaced America's in the past twelve years is unprecedented in economic history. He estimates that it took the United States at least a hundred years to achieve a similar gain against Britain in the era of stable exchange rates.

• Japan's all-important savings rate has boomed. According to Salomon Brothers, the household savings rate exceeded 15 percent last year, up from 13.8 percent in 1989. Japan now generates more than 40 percent of the aggregate savings of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, whose twenty-four countries, including the United States and Germany, account for virtually all of the world's savings.

• Helped by the tremendous flow of savings, Japanese employers have been investing nearly three times as much per worker in new plants and equipment as American employers. As Kenneth Courtis points out, this clears the way for another huge leap in Japanese worker productivity later in this decade. Japanese corporate investment was at roughly the same level last year as in the boom year of 1989.

Doomsayers point out that Japan's economic growth rate slowed last year, to perhaps as little as 1.5 percent. But such a slowdown is part of a normal cyclical pattern for the Japanese economy. There have been eleven slowdowns since Japan's economic miracle began, in the 1950s, and they have invariably been followed by a powerful advance in subsequent years.

Probably nowhere is Japan's robust economic health more apparent than in the labor market. Many industries are so vigorous that the country's chronic labor shortage has hardly been alleviated by the slowdown. The experience of one nationwide parcel-delivery company provides a startling example. Desperate to recruit local drivers for its high-pressure service, it now pays young men straight out of school nearly $100,000 a year—yet it is persistently shorthanded.

Labor is in such demand that government and industry officials in Tokyo have been conducting talks to deal with the most acute bottlenecks. Some commentators in the West have blamed the shortage on a demographic contraction in the Japanese labor force. As with so many other aspects of the view that Japan is in economic decline, this is simply wrong. Japan's work force has actually been growing in the 1990s by nearly 1.2 million people a year.

DESPITE ALL THIS, the press has widely proclaimed Japan's economic collapse. *Time* and *Newsweek*, for instance, both ran cover stories on the subject in the same week last spring. *Newsweek*'s headline was "JAPAN: THE BIG SLUMP."

Probably no media organization has done more to propagate the myth of Japan's economic collapse than *The Wall Street Journal*. Many of the independent economic commentators featured on the newspaper's editorial page have been particularly outspoken: a year ago an article by Alan Reynolds, of the Hudson Institute, suggested that the Japanese economy was so fragile that the Bush Administration should stop pressing Japan on trade. Calling on Bush to help get the Japanese economy "back on its feet," Reynolds said, "So long as the Japanese economy and stock market remain so depressed, threatening the Japanese government is a waste of time."

Reynolds's article appeared in March. As it happens, the trade figures for March, which came out a few weeks later, were sharply at odds with his gloomy picture: Japan's exports exceeded $30 billion—one of the best figures Japan has ever achieved. Nonetheless, in an editorial last December the *Journal*'s editors maintained that Japan was facing an "economic emergency" so serious that Tokyo might soon apply to the Clinton Administration for aid. Since Japan enjoys by far the world's largest surplus of capital and the United States suffers the world's most acute shortage, the *Journal*'s logic was preposterous.

How could one of America's most respected newspapers publish such nonsense? Several factors have served to cloud the American press's view of Japan. Perhaps the most important, as Clyde Prestowitz, a leading Japan-watcher, points out, is that much of the American press is blinded by Adam Smith ideology. Editors believe that the Japanese government's *dirigiste* system of economic management is profoundly wrong, so they shut out any information that might cast doubt on their ideology. Chalmers Johnson, a University of California professor who is America's top expert on Japanese industrial policy, puts it bluntly: "Japan's slump is a fake invented by American ideologues. It reflects the schadenfreude of economists who propound discredited theories."

American correspondents are bamboozled by the language barrier. The Japanese word for "recession" or "slump," for instance, is *fukyo*—but, unbeknownst to most foreign correspondents in Tokyo, the Japanese use it to mean something quite different from the ostensible meaning in English. As the Tokyo-based investment banker Taggart Murphy points out, whereas the standard Western definition of a recession is two consecutive quarters of economic contraction (falling GNP), the Japanese think they are in a recession whenever economic growth slows to an annualized rate of less than three percent in three consecutive quarters.

The language barrier also helps to explain a high quotient of inaccurate reporting from Tokyo. In November, for instance, a Tokyo-based correspondent writing in *The New Republic* flatly reported, "Nissan announced that it will fire 3,000 domestic employees, and the consumer electronics firm JVC is laying off an unprecedented 4,000." In fact Nissan is firing no one, and the only workers who may lose jobs at JVC form a pool of 1,500 *temporary* workers which fluctuates in response to ever-changing demand. The impression that Japan's lifetime-employment system was breaking down was wholly inaccurate. Not only has no significant employer broken with lifetime employment but there has not been a single bankruptcy among lifetime employers.

Admittedly. Nissan's cutbacks include the closure of one plant in Japan. But this is the company's second-oldest plant, and the output forgone is being replaced two and a half times over by factory expansions in Japan, the United States, Britain, and Spain. Recent reports of a backtracking Japanese car industry bring to mind a gloomy report in *Time* magazine in 1978: "diminished expectations" were supposedly forcing Toyota to cut its capacity by 30 percent.

Alan E. Brown, until recently the head of Barclays Bank in Japan, observes that Japanese people tend to use

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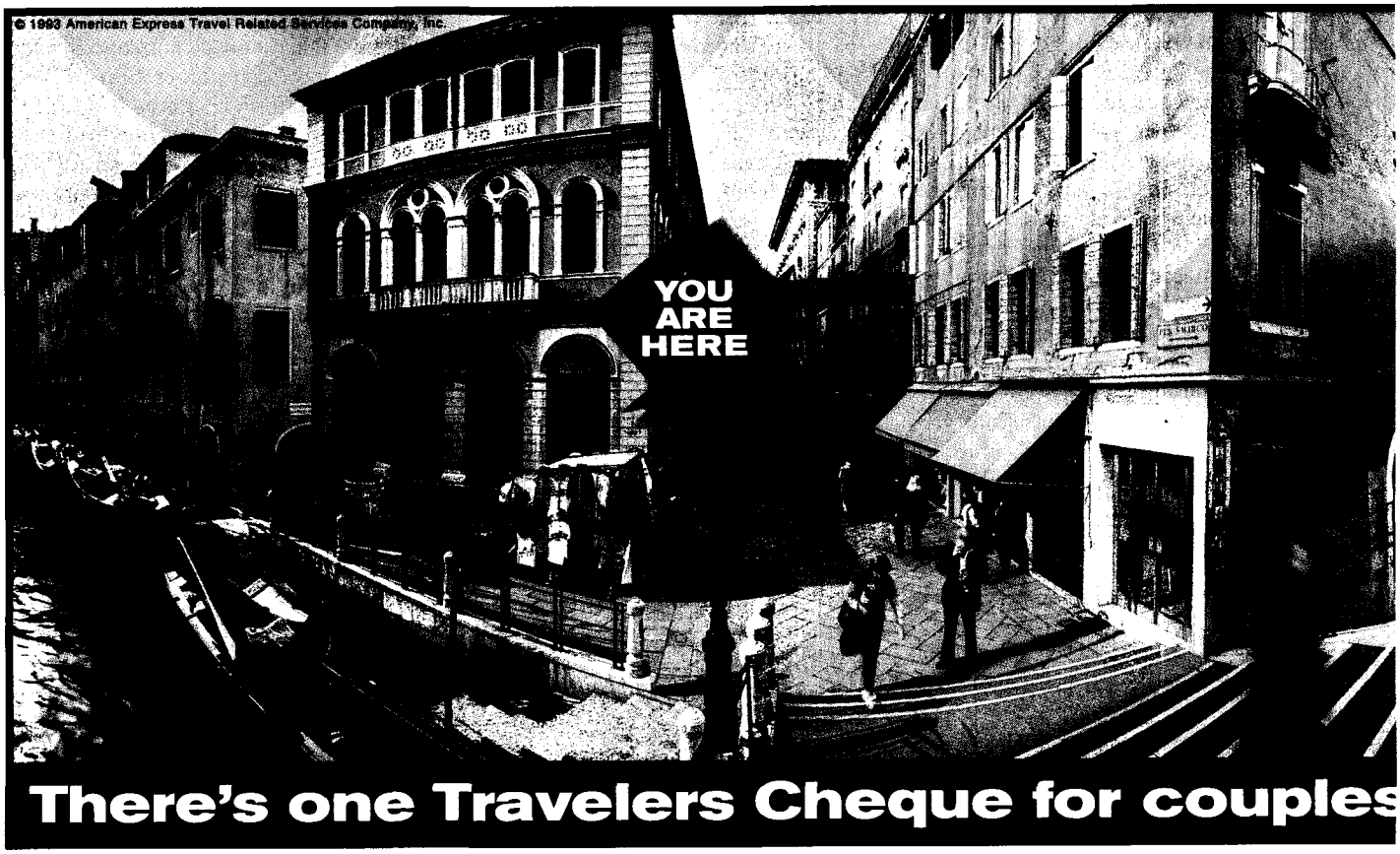
extremely dramatic language in talking about their economic problems. Many foreign residents have noted that the Japanese press often makes mountains out of molehills. As the well-informed Tokyo management consultant Tait Ratcliffe has pointed out, the Tokyo establishment seems to encourage press hysteria about minor economic difficulties. He believes that corporate Japan occasionally finds it useful to induce an economic catharsis, so that employers can ease some deadwood senior management into early retirement and chop back business-entertainment budgets.

American editors have perhaps been influenced by the British press, whose dim view of Japanese efficiency seems to have been formed watching *The Bridge on the River Kwai.* Rupert Murdoch's prestigious London *Sunday Times* has set the tone with extravagantly doom-laden coverage, whose point of view is abetted by a distinct lack of institutional memory in Tokyo—the newspaper has never maintained a staff correspondent here.

Books by writers associated with the London-based *Economist* magazine have given considerable international visibility to the British view. In 1989 the magazine's business-affairs editor, Bill Emmott, published *The Sun Also Sets*, and last year a former economics editor, Brian Reading, published *Japan: The Coming Collapse*, and the Far East finance editor, Christopher Wood, published *The Bubble Economy: The Japanese Economic Collapse.* In important ways these books contradict one another's logic. Emmott's main point, for instance, is that Japan will be hurt by an allegedly falling savings rate, whereas Reading thinks that Japan faces a crisis for the opposite reason: the economy will choke on a glut of savings.

Whatever the logic, everyone seems to find a way eventually to the conclusion that Japan's economic policies "can't work." An unspoken assumption that they are misguided has informed Western press coverage of Japan since the 1950s, and it helps explain why successive generations of Western correspondents in Tokyo have shown a perverse tendency to search for negative meaning in every Japanese economic opportunity and achievement. Perhaps the best example is the way Japan's response to the 1973 oil crisis was reported. Everyone today agrees that higher oil prices catapulted Japanese industry into leadership not only in cars but also in a slew of other oil-related industries where leading U.S. corporations were badly wrong-footed. At the time, however, the English-speaking media cast Japan as the worst victim of the crisis—and did so in end-of-the-world terms. *The Economist* reported that with Japanese employers supposedly cutting output by up to 55 percent, "conditions approaching anarchy" might ensue, setting the scene for military rule, or for forces of the extreme left or perhaps the extreme right to seize power. *Newsweek* made much of an increase in bankruptcies, and *Business Week* talked about the end of the system of lifetime employment—that obligatory refrain in Japan-collapse stories since the late 1960s. The familiar



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theme was resurrected in the 1990s by, for instance, an editorial-page writer in *The New York Times* last November.

ANOTHER CONSTANT in Japan reportage over the decades has been that the Japanese financial system is a "house of cards" perennially teetering on the brink of collapse. That view has been powerfully revived by the 1990s stock-market crash, but, as on previous occasions, Japan has demonstrated that its economy is capable of strong growth in the face of apparently terrible financial conditions. In fact, the worst of the stock-market collapse took place in 1990, just as Japan was achieving its second highest rate of growth in the past fifteen years.

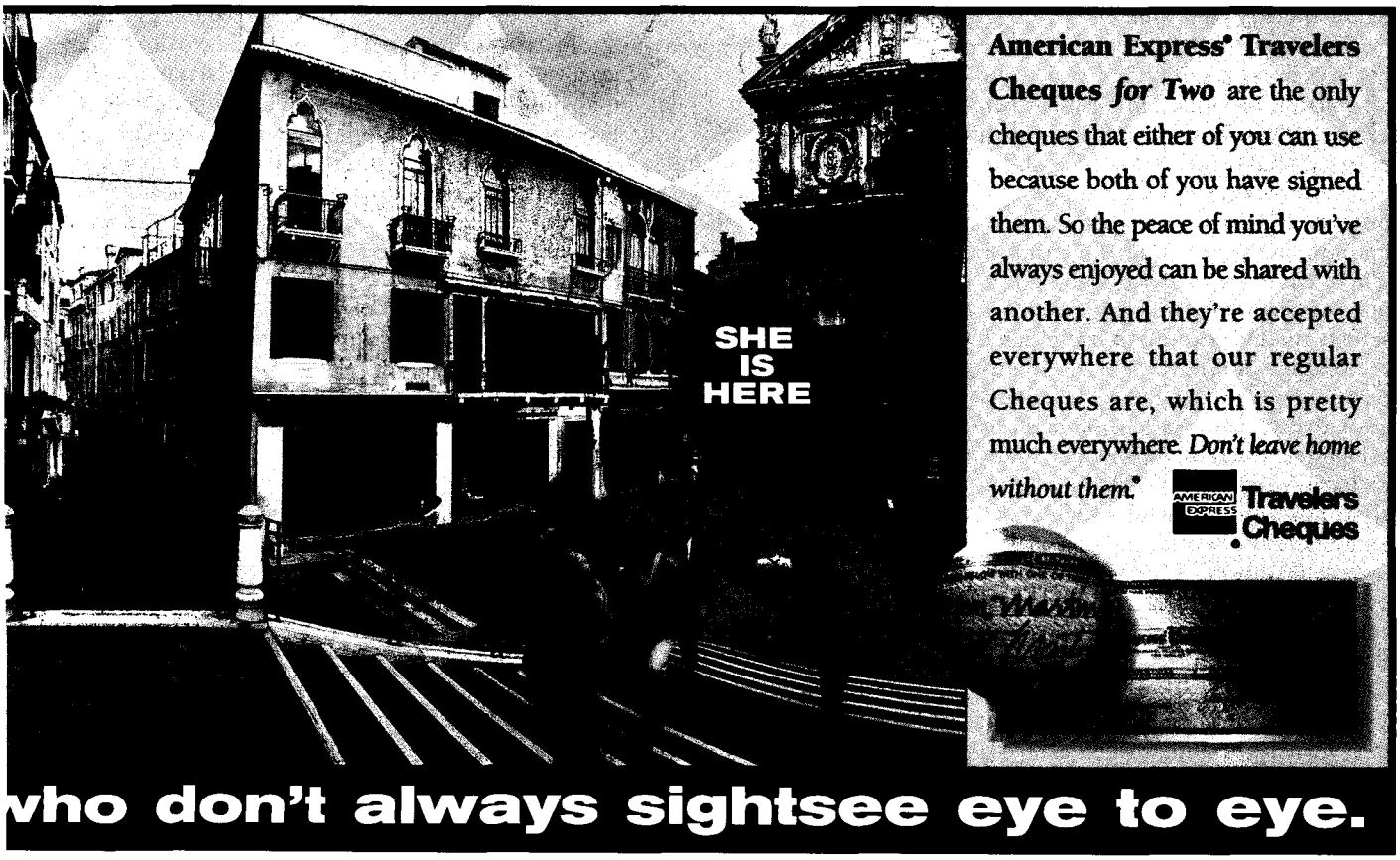
In appraising reports of Japan's financial woes, it is useful to distinguish between two quite separate kinds of loss:

Real-economy loss. A real-economy loss results when, for instance, an overoptimistic corporation invests in an expensive new factory that later turns out to be redundant and has to be scrapped. Another form of real-economy loss is corporate extravagance on, for instance, top-management perks. In the 1980s one Wall Street securities firm bought Ultrasuede wallpaper for the CEO's executive jet. The CEO later resigned—so, assuming that the new CEO had different taste, the Ultrasuede represented a real-economy loss. Such mistakes and misappropriations render the whole nation poorer and serve as a drag on economic growth.

Symbol-economy loss. "Symbol economy" is a term sometimes used to describe the stock market. A symbol-economy loss occurs when, for instance, a corporation makes a share issue and the share price collapses. Clearly, for buyers of the issue this is painful. But such losses do not necessarily imply bad news for the real economy. The share price may have dropped merely because it had soared to unrealistically high levels. What matters for the real economy is how the new injection of capital is used to expand the company's underlying business. If a company squanders the money developing a new product that does not sell, this represents a real-economy loss. But if the company applies the new money wisely, its output will increase and so will the country's GNP, through the creation or enhancement of jobs.

Most of the Japanese financial mayhem that the Western press has been chronicling lately is merely symbol-economy losses. The truth behind the Tokyo stock-market boom of the late 1980s (the "bubble" period) is that big corporations profited handsomely by selling vast amounts of securities at inflated prices. The buyers, typically rich private citizens or small entrepreneurial companies, have since seen a severe diminution of their financial strength—but this has actually been in a good cause. Not only have the corporations that are the key agents of the country's industrial policy been enriched, but the egalitarianism of Japan's all-important social contract has been reinforced.

Perhaps the best example of the counterintuitive effects of the burst bubble is provided by the warrant-issuing boom of the late 1980s. Warrants are investment instruments that entitle an



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investor to buy a corporation's shares several years down the road at a price agreed upon at the outset. Most of the great number of warrants floated by Japanese corporations in the late 1980s are now worthless, because the price in the warrant contract is ridiculously higher than today's depressed share prices. The buyers of the warrants have lost perhaps as much as $150 billion, according to Kenneth Courtis. But the issuers, a select group of Japanese corporations, have gained about $50 billion, and have been spared the need to dilute their share capital by issuing new shares to the warrant holders. If they wish to raise fresh funds, they can readily do so by selling bonds at some of the world's lowest interest rates (long-term Japanese bonds now yield 1.5 percent less than similar American bonds).

The bursting of the bubble brought to an end a brief era of essentially free capital for Japanese industry. That is a crisis only for those people who imagined that the stock boom would go on forever (they are the same people who think money grows on trees). Astute observers fully realized at the time that the bubble was a unique window of opportunity for corporate Japan which would quickly slam shut.

JAPAN'S MUCH-publicized real-estate collapse has followed a similar pattern. The victims have been almost entirely small-scale real-estate companies and their lenders; Japan's all-important industrial economy has remained sheltered from the turmoil. There have, for instance, been no reports of major industrial corporations in serious trouble because of badly timed real-estate purchases, let alone any bankruptcies. In fact, the evidence suggests that big corporations profited, by selling real estate at peak prices. Many of Japan's richest individuals, in contrast, have lost out badly—evidenced by a dramatic drop recently in sales of upscale German cars and other big-ticket imported luxuries. Again, wealth has changed hands—it has gone back into the coffers of the big corporations—but has not been extinguished.

Some reports have suggested that the Japanese banking system is on the brink of collapse. But the banks' exposure to real-estate losses is not as great as has been portrayed. Much of it takes the form of lending to industrial corporations that have used real estate as collateral. If the current slowdown follows past patterns, we may yet see at least one bankruptcy of a significant industrial business. But generally such loans are sound, because most major industrial corporations have been having little difficulty servicing their debts. The Japanese banks' problem loans (loans on which interest payments are in arrears) represent only 3.5 percent of their total assets. This is little more than half the proportion at most major American banks—a fact that helps explain why the London-based specialist bank rating agency IBCA accords leading Japanese banks a rating typically one notch higher than equivalent American banks.

The American press has tended to dismiss such facts, claiming that the Japanese banks' published financial figures are unreliable. Reporters' claims to superior knowledge would be more convincing if they had a better record in covering other aspects of Japanese finance in recent years. American correspondents predicted for three years running—in 1990, 1991, and 1992—that Japanese banks would fail to meet tight new capital standards introduced under the auspices of the Basel-based Bank of International Settlements (BIS). The standards were invented by British and American bankers as a way to curb the international expansion of the Japanese. Not only have the Japanese banks confounded the American press by meeting the standards each year, but they have succeeded in expanding considerably faster than U.S. banks during the BIS transition period.

One of the problems for reporters is that the Japanese banking industry has done little to scotch wild rumors about its troubles. This seems irrational—but there is a rational explanation. The banks are under official pressure to conduct a purge of real-estate speculators who cannot pay their interest bills. Rendering relative innocents penniless is a distressing process for everyone involved; the bankers undoubtedly find their jobs easier if they can plead that their own backs are against the wall.

Other criticism of the banking system has centered on the Tokyo bureaucrats' apparently erratic handling of financial regulation in recent years—but there may well be an important industrial-policy rationale for this. Chalmers Johnson is among a group of well-informed Japan-watchers who believe that recent financial events have been stage-managed by the Bank of Japan in a bid to force mergers in Japanese banking. Certainly, most observers would agree with Jesper Koll that "the strong have gotten stronger."

AFTER ALL the paper-shuffling is accounted for, it's clear that very little of the bubble money leaked out in consumption. In fact, unlike America in the 1980s, Japan saw personal consumption fall all through the bubble period and after (it is down from 60 percent of GNP in 1984 to only 57 percent today). Since the money was not consumed, it necessarily went into investment, albeit often in highly circuitous ways, by means of Japan's extremely complex banking and corporate structures.

Some observers have said that the bursting of the bubble has reduced the banks' ability to lend to industry. But this effect has been exaggerated, and the conclusion drawn—that industry will be starved of capital—is unsupportable. The banking system is only one of several pipelines by which a nation's savings are conveyed to industry. If banks are unable to handle as much of the savings flow as they would like, they will bid less aggressively for deposits, and thus savings will flow to industry through life-insurance companies and other institutions.

Given that the financial turmoil has not constricted savings flows, the only remaining way in which it might significantly hurt the real economy is through the misallocation of funds—for example, investments in companies that proceed to waste the money on boondoggles. Tellingly, the business press has come up with no examples of large corporate boondoggles in Japan. Christopher Wood has suggested that some corporations have been remiss in using capital raised during the boom to upgrade company dormitories, in which many young Japanese executives live until they marry. This hardly looks like reckless overconsumption, however, given that the residents of these dormitories are often Japan's brightest—people who in New York would start at $80,000 or more a year, drive a Porsche, and fly to the Virgin Islands for weekends. Remember that Japan's per capita income is 42 percent higher than America's.

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A few exaggerated scandals excepted, most of Japan's savings went into industrial investment and other officially encouraged uses. In real estate, for instance, real-economy losses have been trivial, because Japan, unlike the United States, has no large-scale oversupply of office space. Actually, Japan badly needs more office space, a fact corroborated by rents, which have remained generally buoyant, and by the extremely cramped conditions in which most Japanese salarymen work. Moreover, despite all the supposed turmoil in real-estate finance, building work has continued wherever it has begun. There has been no expensive dislocation in the form of half-built buildings going to waste.

People suggest that the bubble years encouraged Japanese industry to create vast amounts of excess manufacturing capacity—but history has shown that Japan always manages to find markets for its goods. At home, Japanese corporations can generally realize healthy profit margins. Overseas, they cut prices ruthlessly if necessary, regarding the loss as a market-development cost associated with establishing leadership in future growth areas such as Indonesia and China.

Many Western writers have traced a parallel between Japan today and America sixty years ago. Japan, they say, is doomed to a 1930s-style depression after 1920s-style financial excesses. The parallel is spurious. We now know that there is an easy antidote to the chronic shortfall in demand that caused the Great Depression: Keynesian economics. Tokyo has resorted to Keynesian stimulation in the past few months, and as a result, the Tokyo-based economist Robert Feldman predicts, the economy will shortly resume a respectable three percent–plus growth rate. Keynes has, of course, been out of fashion in the West for decades, because Keynesianism's side effects—inflation, an increase in government borrowing, and a rise in imports—are deemed intolerable. These side effects are hardly a concern in Japan, however: the authorities have good administrative control over wage settlements and have been running budget surpluses in recent years. And, of course, Japan's various natural and artificial barriers to imports ensure that the benefits of demand stimulation will not leak abroad.

—Eamonn Fingleton

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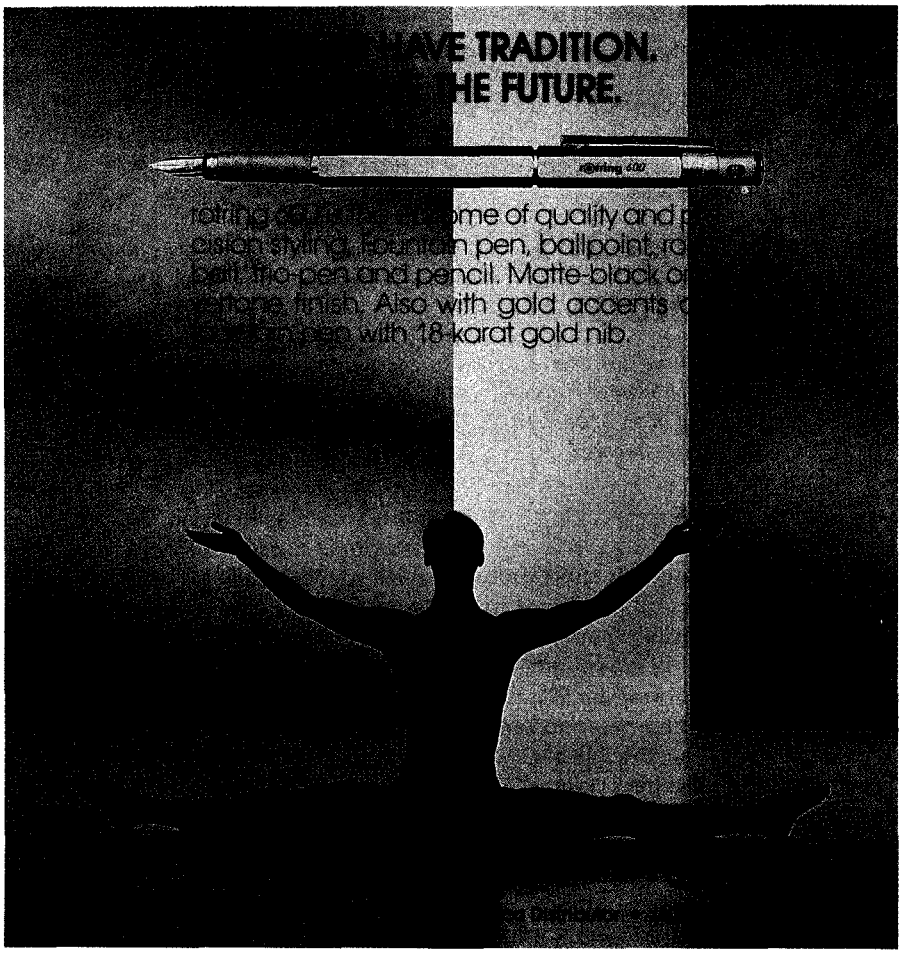

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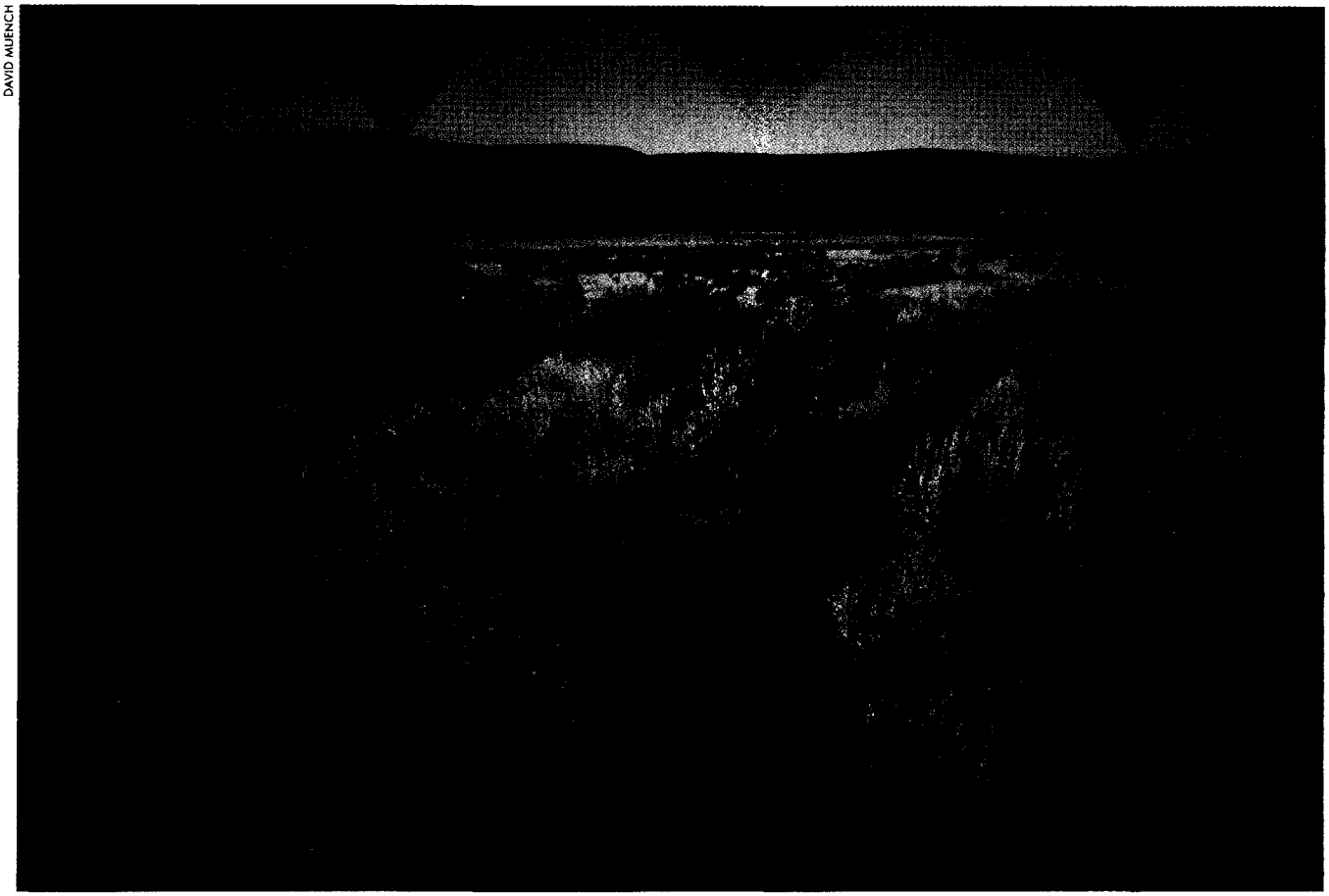

In this sagebrush community along the Oregon Trail in Idaho's Snake River plains, cheatgrass has replaced the native bunchgrasses

ENVIRONMENT

The Cheatgrass Problem

Unless U.S. land-use and cattle-grazing policies change radically, tens of millions of acres of western grassland are doomed

DRIVING THROUGH the Snake River plains of southwestern Idaho, a casual visitor would not realize that the big-sky country fanning out beyond the windshield is desperately ill. Hazy blue mountains on the horizon, a few nearby hills that call attention to the prevailing flatness, and long stretches of treeless sagebrush steppe painted straw-yellow by the dry summer grass: isn't that how these rangelands should look?

Not quite. And the reason they don't look right is that they are afflicted by what one authority calls "the most devastating ecological problem in the West."

The trouble starts with that straw-yellow grass. It's the weedy, alien annual grass *Bromus tectorum*, widely known as cheatgrass—also known as downy brome, downy chess, bronco grass, Mormon oats, six-weeks grass, and junegrass. This profusion of common names underscores the scope of the problem. Cheatgrass grows in most states, and is probably the most common plant in the intermountain West, an area roughly four times the size of New England which stretches from the Rockies to the Cascades and Sierras and from the Sonoran Desert to eastern Washington. In the sagebrush grasslands, its preferred habitat, cheat dominates more than 100 million acres. Mike Pellant, a range conservationist with the Idaho office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), calls Idaho's Snake River plains the "cheatgrass capital of the world," but northern Nevada and northern Utah could dispute his claim. Pellant would no doubt love to lose the title.

Cheat is a thin-stemmed, knee-high grass topped by a spray of bristly awns, the kind that elicit curses when they catch in socks. A native of Eurasia, it arrived in North America in the mid-1800s, making its first recorded appearances in wheat fields in Washington, Utah, and British Columbia. Farmers named it cheatgrass because they felt that this pernicious outsider cheated them of their crops. In the following decades cheat seeds were sown across the West as they lodged in the hair of livestock, got mixed in with shipments of wheat seeds, and got dumped along railroad sidings when cattle bedstraw was discarded. By the 1930s cheatgrass had shown up in most of the areas where it is present today. The broad dispersal of cheat would have caused little trouble, however, if ranchers hadn't inadvertently weakened the range's natural defenses.

Cheat flourishes amid ruin: even though it found the environment of the sagebrush grasslands agreeable, an undamaged range could have withstood the Eurasian invasion. By the late 1800s, however, most of the native plant com-

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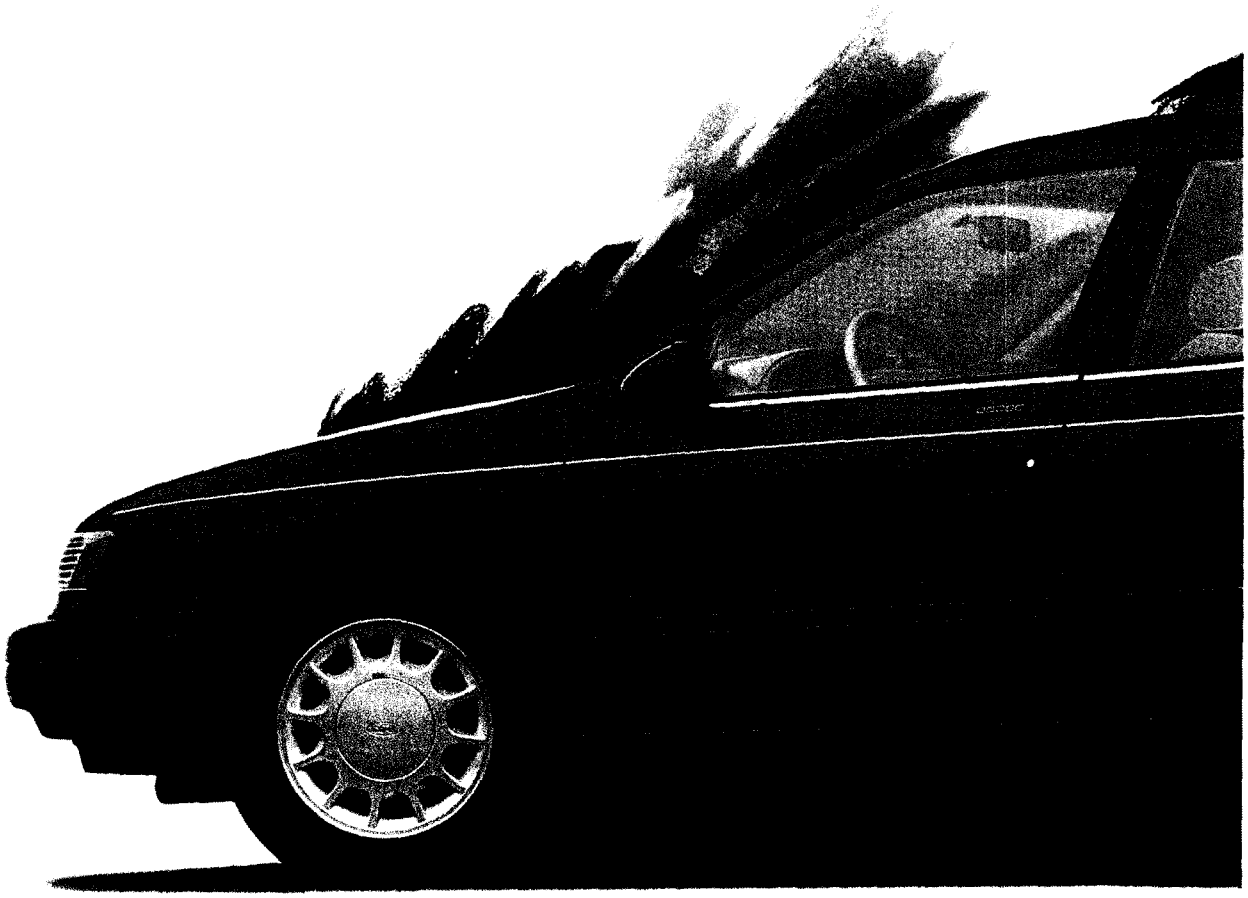

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munities of the intermountain West had been flagrantly degraded by overgrazing. For several decades cattle and sheep had been swarming over the land; not until many years later would most of this range come under the supervision of the BLM and other government agencies and be managed with a modicum of restraint.

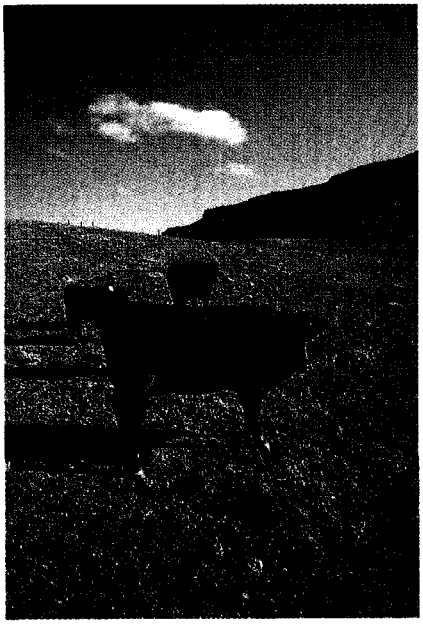
Many native sagebrush-grassland plants are easily damaged by livestock, particularly cattle. They evolved without being subjected to regular, frequent depredations by herds of large herbivores and can't cope well with the unaccustomed grazing, trampling, and wallowing—whereas cheat evolved under pressure from camels, horses, and other formidable grazers, and can comfortably co-exist with cattle. As long as cheat has time to set seed, which it does quickly and prolifically, it isn't affected by trampling, for cheat is an annual, and so the adult plant becomes dispensable once it has done its reproductive duty. Cheat can also stand up to repeated grazing, because it often grows back from its ground-level meristem even if cropped short.

Another feature of sagebrush grasslands provides the means by which cheat tends to enter a native plant community. Most native grasses in the intermountain West are bunchgrasses, which grow in distinct clumps with only sparse vegetation between. In an undisturbed community these spaces are covered by a thin layer of lichens, mosses, and other organisms, called the cryptogamic crust. Even light grazing shatters this fragile crust, providing openings for cheat seeds to take root.

Once cheat has established colonies within a native plant community, it reveals its decisive adaptation: it can germinate and grow rapidly. This ability gives cheat a conclusive edge when its seedlings are pitted against native seedlings. Typical is cheat's interaction with bluebunch wheatgrass, which was the most common grass in most of the sagebrush grasslands before the ascendancy of cheat.

Both cheatgrass and bluebunch wheatgrass seeds usually germinate in the fall. Bluebunch roots grow perhaps six inches, and then growth slows to a near standstill when winter cools the soil at the depth of the seedlings' root tips to temperatures below 46°–50° Fahrenheit. Cheat roots grow more than half again as fast as bluebunch roots, and they can grow at soil temperatures at least as low as 37°. Because the roots rapidly push down to warmer soil depths, where temperatures rarely drop below 37°, they can keep growing through the winter.

In spring, when soil temperatures rise sufficiently for bluebunch wheatgrass's roots to resume growing, cheat's roots are already about three feet long and its secondary roots are often well developed. As the thirsty bluebunch roots move deeper, they encounter almost no moisture, because the cheat roots have already taken it. As a consequence, during the dry summers characteristic of the intermountain West, many of these bluebunch wheatgrass plants die from lack of water.


GEORGE WUERTHNER

Overgrazed rangeland, ripe for invasion

When competing with cheatgrass seedlings, the seedlings of most native plants in the intermountain West meet much the same fate. This doesn't mean, however, that a few scattered cheat colonies will inexorably expand and take over a native community. Mature, healthy native perennials possess established root systems that can compete successfully with cheat for moisture. Cheat may enter a healthy native community, and even become a permanent resident, without overrunning it—unless further disturbance occurs.

Overgrazing is one such disturbance, and its persistence leads to a steady increase in the density of cheat. Steady, that is, until the cheat population becomes so dense that fires take over.

FIRES HAVE always had an impact on sagebrush grasslands, but before cheat they were infrequent and small. Because bunchgrasses are scattered and the cryptogamic crust doesn't carry fire, fire doesn't spread easily in a native plant community. Many native plants stay green well into the summer, which delays the onset of the fire season. No one is sure exactly how often fire hit native communities in pre-cheat days, but a widely cited 1990 study by Steve Whisenant, an ecologist then at Brigham Young University, indicates that historically any given site in the Snake River plains burned at least once every sixty to 110 years.

Cheatgrass, though, grows in dense stands that carry fire with frightening ease. Cheat usually dries out by mid-June, some two to four weeks earlier than most of the natives, significantly lengthening the fire season. Its fine growth readily ignites. Once cheatgrass fills in enough of the open spaces in a sagebrush-grassland community, the site is virtually certain to burn soon—as often as every three to five years, according to Whisenant's study. Bill Casey, the branch chief of fire management for the Boise district of the BLM, notes that typically more acres burn in his district each year than in any other district in the country with the exception of some districts in Alaska.

The speed of cheat fires makes them difficult to contain. The thunderstorms that spark wildfires usually pack strong winds that fan the flames. Everyone in cheat country seems to have a story about an extreme example—like the one I heard from Stephen Monsen, an ecologist with the U.S. Forest Service. One day Monsen was driving through southern Idaho when he caught up to a cheat fire that was blowing parallel to the road. Monsen slowed down to pace the fire, but he didn't have to slow down much—it was sizzling along at about 40 m.p.h.

What Casey calls "multiple occurrences" also make it difficult to fight cheat fires. Dry thunderstorms rumble along the storm track from Oregon and unleash thousands of lightning bolts into cheat stands throughout the Snake River plains. Often many widely separated fires start within a few hours; at one point in 1986, forty-six fires were burning simultaneously in the Boise district. "It's a zoo," Casey says. "We're absolutely inundated with fire reports.

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We have to set priorities because we can handle only three or four good ones at a time."

After fire strikes a cheat-infested native community, the cheatgrass usually flourishes. In a severe blaze the sagebrush and many other shrubs are killed and the aboveground growth of the herbaceous species, including cheatgrass, is consumed. After the crowns of mature native bunchgrasses burn, their roots wither, and with the mature natives out of the way, the competitive advantages of cheat seedlings enable them to win the recolonization race. One study showed that three years after a burn some 10,000 cheat plants crowded each square meter of the study area, leaving no room or resources for any other plants.

Less-severe fires may spare mature native plants, but if the fire stresses them too much, and especially if subsequent grazing adds to their stress, they become less competitive with cheat. That allows cheat to proliferate, which increases the odds that the site will burn again in the near future. That next burn will either kill the remaining mature native plants or stress them further, aiding the spread of cheat and setting the stage for the next fire. This downward spiral generally continues until cheat dominates the community. Fire begets cheat and cheat begets fire.

By disrupting natural plant succession, the cheat-wildfire cycle allows cheat to maintain a stranglehold on a plant community for decades, perhaps longer. Simultaneously, the fires spread cheat when they intrude into native communities. In an average year in the Boise district two or three decades ago, with cheat already established, sixty to seventy fires burned 25,000 to 30,000 acres. In an average year from 1980 to 1987, after several more turnings of the cheat-wildfire cycle, 115 fires burned 186,000 acres, despite increased suppression efforts. Literally as well as figuratively, the sagebrush grasslands are going up in smoke.

Cheatgrass doesn't, however, restrict itself to sagebrush grasslands. As an annual, it evolves quickly, and adapted strains are stealing into habitats that cheat originally found inhospitable: wetter, colder areas, where the grass is overwhelming much of the piñon-juniper woodland and even turning up in Ponderosa pine forests at elevations as high as 7,000 feet; and drier, hotter areas, where it is corrupting vast expanses of salt desert.

To make matters worse, a host of alien plants even more pestilential than cheat are spreading through the intermountain West. The most prolific is medusahead wildrye, another weedy, alien annual grass. Medusahead possesses all the bad traits of cheat and some traits that are even worse. Indeed, medusa usually outcompetes cheatgrass, so it's thriving in the wake of cheat fires. Eventually medusahead may oust cheatgrass as the dominant plant in much of the sagebrush grasslands. Knapweed, musk thistle, skeletonweed, and other alien weeds fully as unsavory as medusahead are also encroaching on the range. The more the land is degraded, the more such plants increase; and the more such plants increase, the more the land is degraded.

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In their darker moments scientists speculate that if we don't pull out of this tailspin, in a hundred years we may be left with a barren landscape of spiked, noxious alien weeds, pocked with rock piles and patches of eroded earth, as has happened elsewhere in the world. Already the cheat-wildfire cycle is exacting a steep ecological price. Soil erosion has accelerated, wildlife habitat has been damaged, and soil fertility has been reduced. Robust communities that used to include dozens of plant species have degenerated into cheat monocultures, and when plant diversity plummets, so does the diversity of the insects, reptiles, birds, and mammals that depend on those plants.

Though ecologists see cheatgrass as an instrument of impoverishment with no redeeming qualities, ranchers tend to view it with ambivalence. Unlike a diverse native community, in which one or another of the plants usually is green and appealing to cattle, cheat monocultures most often present cattle with dry, barbed, almost unpalatable forage. Cheat's sharp awns can stab livestock and cause lumpy jaw and blindness. But—and this "but" has sapped the livestock industry's resolve to deal with cheatgrass—for about six to eight weeks each spring cheat provides lush growth that cattle relish.

Bob Baker, an Idaho rancher who runs cattle on cheat-ridden range in the Snake River plains, says that he'd hate to do without cheat's springtime abundance. He has even used cheat for winter forage. Ideally, he'd have a range of native plants mixed with select alien ones, including cheat. Such variety is "like having meat, potatoes, and vegetables on your plate," he explains. Increasingly, however, as the cheat-wildfire cycle continues, only cheatgrass is on the plate, and that concerns Baker and other ranchers. The threat of medusahead worries them even more, because it's virtually unpalatable all the time. Baker bought his own firefighting equipment in order to pounce on any blazes that start on his land—as happens about once a year. "You can lose all your fall and winter forage in an afternoon," he says.

THE FIRST STEP in dealing with cheatgrass and other alien weeds should be to protect the native plant communities that are still reasonably intact. That means shielding them from further disturbance, so that their natural resistance to cheat isn't undermined. This might not stop cheat's expansion, but it would slow it.

The most widely accepted course of action is to suppress the fires and stop them from spreading into native communities—but how to do that is problematic. Firefighting alone will never do more than slightly diminish the rate of cheat's conquest. More promising are various preventive strategies, among them "greenstripping," a BLM initiative that has garnered widespread support. A greenstrip is a firebreak planted with vegetation that is resistant both to fire and to intrusion by cheat. Standard firebreaks won't work, because cheat thrives in the bared earth and soon covers the open space. Range managers hope to reduce the size of wildfires by carving large cheat lands into smaller and smaller tracts. Greenstripping is

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expensive, however; developing effective plants is difficult; and often, particularly during drought, plantings fail. Even if greenstripping eventually works as hoped, it's far from a panacea. Mike Pellant, the director of the greenstripping program, says, "Greenstripping will slow a cheat fire, preserve some resources, and reduce fire costs, but it's still just a stopgap."

Long-term protection will come only if anti-wildfire measures are accompanied by a substantial decrease in the amount of disturbance caused by livestock, but so far grazing management has been relatively neglected as a means of protecting intact native communities. Although most scientists strongly recommend reducing and relocating grazing, the relevant government agencies have mixed feelings about the idea, and most ranchers despise it. Ranchers and many agency managers feel wronged when current grazing practices are impugned. They assert that today's grazing management represents a huge improvement over the anarchy of years past. They're right. Unfortunately, the improvements haven't kept pace with the demands generated by the rapidly escalating cheatgrass invasion.

Recent research has yielded much knowledge that could further improve grazing management. For example, livestock are turned out on many allotments in May and June because the conventional wisdom has it that grazing earlier would rob plants of carbohydrates during a critical growth stage. However, new evidence indicates that only small stores of carbohydrates are needed, and that some native plants (in particular bluebunch wheatgrass) are in fact most vulnerable precisely in May and June, so they would be better protected if grazed in March or April (but not when the ground is still wet from the spring thaw, or the trampling will devastate the natives; grazing management is not simple and doesn't lend itself to rigid, one-dimensional schemes).

Grazing practices also need to be tailored to the nature of a particular site. A hilly allotment shouldn't be assigned a carrying capacity based solely on the amount of forage it contains, because cattle will avoid the steep slopes and throng the bottomlands, hammering the more accessible areas. So-called suitability criteria are supposed to block this route to overgrazing, but they're frequently circumvented.

Even some actions that seem ecologically correct must change. For example, managers evaluating a burned winter deer range will rule that the range is ready to be grazed by cattle again if the plants that the deer need are plentiful and prospering. But those plants might be growing on only a third of the site. The remaining two thirds might be dotted with battered bunchgrasses that are just a grazing season or two away from being an easy mark for cheat. Better to keep cattle off until the whole site is healthy enough to resist cheatgrass.

In general, to deal with cheatgrass and its ilk effectively, grazing needs to be managed to combat alien weeds, not to fatten livestock. For example, in determining whether a site that's being rested is ready to be grazed again, managers typically look only at the plants that livestock most like to eat. Instead, grazing should be limited or stopped until most of the native species that make up a community have regained their health, which would give the site maximum immunity from cheat. Until the health of the land takes priority over the finances of ranchers, all the research and grazing schemes in the world won't do much to shield native communities from cheatgrass.

Currently, when the agencies try to restrict grazing, it usually takes several years of laborious and acrimonious administrative procedures—and they seldom even try. Their reluctance stems partly from the enormous political influence that ranchers wield in the intermountain West, and partly from a lack of funding. Sometimes these two elements go together. By cutting funds for monitoring while adding a painstaking monitoring process to the burden of proof already borne by range managers, the BLM has made it very difficult to keep livestock off public land. One BLM manager says, "We've been such a tin-cup-on-the-corner agency, especially in the eighties, that we can't do the monitoring. We see that the land is beat to a pulp, but data is everything in a courtroom."

The inadequacy of BLM range supervision is widely evident. Even in the relatively flush Bruneau Resource Area, in the Snake River plains, the range program employs only six people, all buried in paperwork, to oversee 2.5 million acres. Only one of them monitors the allotments full-time, and for most of the past six months that person has been pulled away by other duties and has hardly set foot in the field.

In addition to trying to defend native plant communities from cheatgrass, land managers sometimes take the offensive. They remove cheat by tilling or prescribed burning—or with herbicides, though the use of them is entangled in legalities and safety issues at the moment. The proactive approach enables managers to choose the sites they want to restore, but they must choose carefully, because mounting an offensive against cheatgrass is expensive. An effort in 1991 to rehabilitate 1,700 acres in the Snake River Birds of Prey Area cost about $100,000—90 percent of the rangeland-improvement budget for an area of more than two million acres, much of which could stand improvement. And devoting 90 percent of that money to a restoration effort was a courageous anomaly. The livestock industry usually sees to it that most range-improvement dollars go to water tanks, pipelines, and other projects to augment grazing. Perversely, items like water tanks and pipelines sometimes encourage livestock to roam farther afield, and they end up degrading reasonably intact native communities.

Even lavishly funded rehabilitation efforts can never be more than limited surgical strikes. As Mike Pellant says, "There's not enough money in the U.S. Treasury to get cheatgrass out of everywhere." For the foreseeable future, even if all the needed changes in attitude and funding are made, range managers in the intermountain West will have to settle for trying to contain cheat and mitigating the environmental harm it causes.

A growing number of scientists consider the alien invasion to be an environmental problem on a par with habitat loss and pollution, yet no comprehensive study of nonindigenous species in America was undertaken until the Office of Technology Assessment mounted such an effort two years ago. Due out early this summer, the OTA report will show that the problem is huge and growing; though cheatgrass is one of the worst offenders—arguably it's the nation's most destructive exotic plant—by no means is it an isolated case. Perhaps the report will provide the impetus to come to grips with alien species before their ecological and financial costs climb any higher.

—Robert Devine

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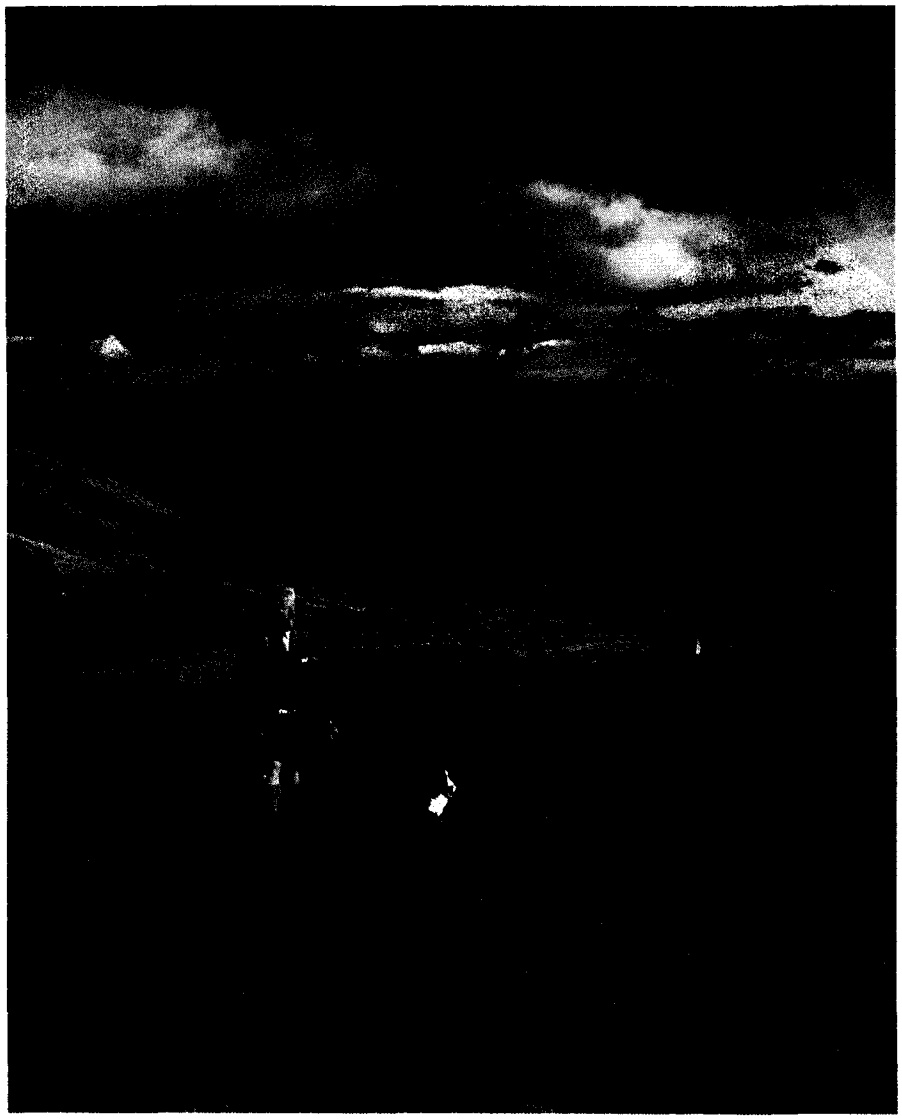

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Far from being the slough of despond it is considered, middle age may be the very best time of life, researchers say—the "it" we work toward

MIDLIFE MYTHS

BY WINIFRED GALLAGHER

ACCORDING TO THE PICture of human development drawn by traditional scientific literature, after a busy childhood and adolescence young adults launch their careers and social lives and then stride into a black box, from which they hobble some forty years later to face a darkly eventful senescence. According to popular literature, what takes place inside the box is an anticlimactic, unsatisfying, and even traumatic march over the hill and toward the grave—or, worse, the nursing home. This scenario complements the anecdotes that often figure in conversations about middle age: that friend of a friend whose lifetime investment in career and family went up in the flames of a passion for the au pair, or that second cousin rumored to have gone off the deep end during the "change of life" when the kids left for college.

So entrenched is the idea that middle age is bad or boring or both that the almost 80 million members of the graying Baby Boom generation won't use the term except in referring to Ozzie and Harriet Nelson or Ward and June Cleaver. "We have a problem here, and it's called denial," the television producer Stan Rogow, whose 1992 series *Middle Ages* was a critical success, recently told *Newsweek*. He blames the show's title for its commercial failure: "'Middle age' is this horrible-sounding thing you've heard throughout your life and hated." The denial he describes frustrates the efforts of researchers who are conducting the first comprehensive, multidisciplinary studies of middle age. They are finding that it is not just an aging process but life's peak experience.

The study of development concentrates mostly on life's early stages, when behavioral and physiological growth and change are simultaneous. In the 1960s the new discipline of gerontology revealed that as people lived much further into old age, a reverse synchrony obtained toward life's end. Looking back from studies of the elderly and, to a lesser extent, forward from studies of the young, researchers began to suspect that middle age might be not simply a long interval during which things are worse than they are in youth and better than they are in old age but a developmental process in its own right—albeit one not particularly tied to changes in the body. Common perceptions of middle age are that it occurs from roughly forty to sixty; in the future, increased longevity and better health may push back the period of middle age even further. The scientists and scholars exploring this part of life, which is probably better described experientially than chronologically—the very concept of middle age itself is something of a cultural artifact, with social and economic components—range from the medically, sociologically, and psychologically oriented John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Successful Midlife Development (MIDMAC), administered from Vero Beach, Florida, to the psychoanalytically and spiritually grounded C. G. Jung Foundation's Center for Midlife Development, in New York City.

Although there are plenty of exceptions, "the data show that middle age is the very best time in life," says Ronald Kessler, a sociologist and MIDMAC fellow who is a program director in the survey research center of the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research. "When looking at the total U.S. population, the best year is fifty. You don't have to deal with the aches and pains of old age or the anxieties of youth: Is anyone going to love me? Will I ever get my career off the ground? Rates of general distress are low—the incidences of depression and anxiety fall at about thirty-five and don't climb again until the late sixties. You're healthy. You're productive. You have enough money to do some of the things you like to do. You've come to terms with your relationships, and the chance of divorce is very low. Midlife is the 'it' you've been working toward. You can turn your attention toward being rather than becoming."

Whereas Kessler's picture of middle age is drawn from facts and figures, the image in most Americans' minds is based on myths, derived not from the ordinary experiences of most people but from the unusual experiences of a few. Although these make for livelier reading and conversation, they generate an unnecessarily gloomy attitude about the middle years which limits people's horizons, according to Margie Lachman, a psychologist, a MIDMAC fellow, and the director of the Life-span Developmental Psychology Laboratory at Brandeis University. When Lachman asked young adults what it means to be middle-aged, they gave such answers as "You think more

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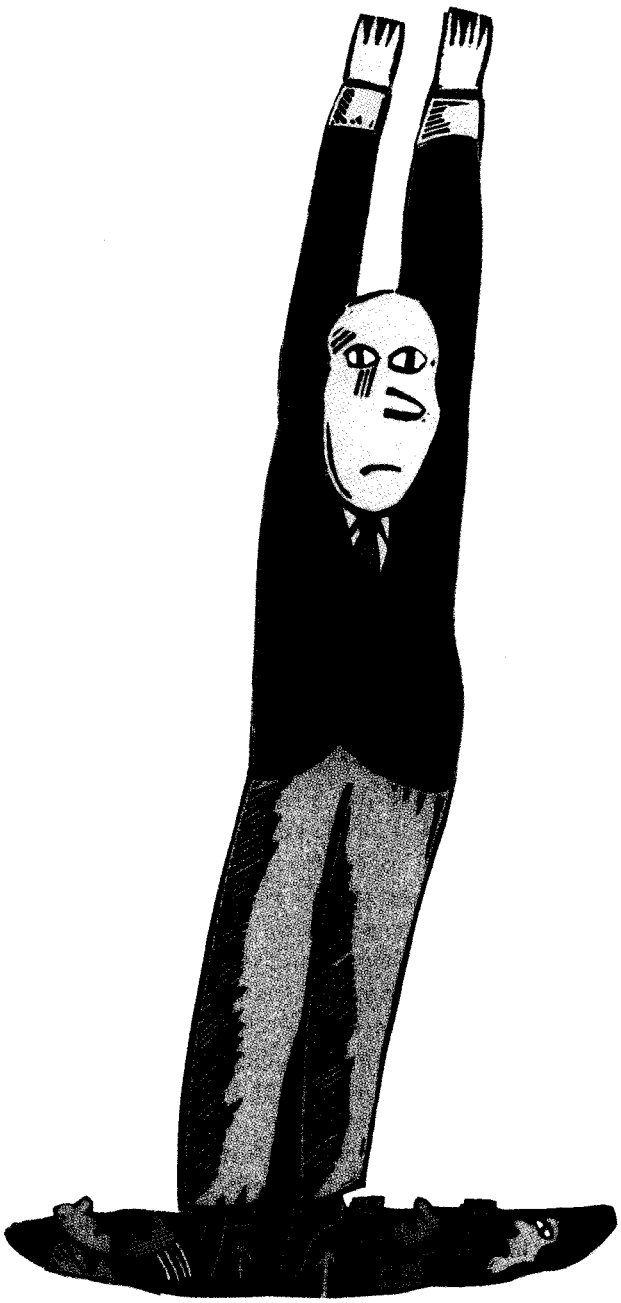

The overwhelming majority of people, surveys show, accomplish the task of coming to terms with the realities of middle age through a long, gentle process—not an acute, painful crisis.

about the past than the future" and "You worry about money for health care." They also assumed that the stress experienced in middle age came from the desire to be young again. Older subjects Lachman surveyed, who knew better, attributed stress to coping with the many demands of the busiest time in life. And whereas the older group saw their lives as generally stable, the younger expected to experience a lot of change—and a crisis—in midlife. "The images and beliefs we have about middle age are the guideposts for our planning, evaluation, and goal-setting," Lachman says. "Are they accurate? Or negative self-fulfilling prophesies?"

Gilbert Brim, a pioneer in the study of social development through the life-span and the director of MIDMAC, agrees. "Passed on from generation to generation," he says, "widely shared cultural beliefs and untested theories about middle age put forward in the media continue to be played out in society. But they're likely to be wrong. There are probably as many myths about midlife now as there were about aging thirty years ago, before the advent of gerontology. The time has come to rid ourselves of these obsolete ideas."

The Inexorable Midlife Crisis?

MOST YOUNGER ADULTS ANTICIPATE THAT BETWEEN their late thirties and their early fifties a day will come when they suddenly realize that they have squandered their lives and betrayed their dreams. They will collapse into a poorly defined state that used to be called a nervous breakdown. Escape from this black hole will mean either embracing an un-American philosophy of eschatological resignation or starting over—jaded stockbrokers off to help Mother Teresa, phlegmatic spouses off to the StairMaster and the singles scene. In short, they will have a midlife crisis.

If youth's theme is potential, midlife's is reality: childhood fantasies are past, the fond remembrances of age are yet to be, and the focus is on coming to terms with the finite resources of the here and now. The overwhelming majority of people, surveys show, accomplish this developmental task, as psychologists put it, through a long, gentle process—not an acute, painful crisis. Over time the college belle or the high school athlete leans less on physical assets, the middle manager's horizons broaden beyond the corner office, and men and women fortunate enough to have significant others regard the rigors of courtship with indulgent smiles. In relying on brains and skill more than beauty and brawn, diffusing competitive urges to include the tennis court or a community fund-raising project, and valuing long-term friendship and domestic pleasures over iffy ecstasies, these people have not betrayed their youthful goals but traded them in for more practical ones that bring previously unsuspected satisfaction. Ronald Kessler says, "The question to ask the middle-aged person isn't just What has happened to you? but

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also How has your experience changed your thinking?"

The middle-aged tend to be guided not by blinding revelations associated with emotional crisis but by slowly dawning adaptive insights into the self and others, which Kessler calls "psychological turning points." Early in midlife these usually involve a recognition of limitations: the local politician realizes that she'll never make it to the U.S. Senate, and the high school English teacher accepts that he's not going to be a famous man of letters. In the middle period of middle age the transitions usually concern what Kessler calls a redirection of goals: "You say to yourself, 'I'm killing myself at work, but the thing that really satisfies me is my family. I'm not going to change jobs, but from now on I'm going to focus more on home, and career will mean something different to me.'" In later middle age, turning points, especially for women, often involve a recognition of strength—"just the opposite of what you'd suppose," Kessler says. "The shy violet, for example, finds herself chairing a committee." These soundings taken and adjustments made prompt not dramatic departures from one's life course but gentle twists and curves.

"Mastery experiences," the more robust versions of which figure in Outward Bound–type adventure vacations, can be catalysts for middle-aged people in their ordinary settings as well. One of Kessler's subjects finally got his college diploma at fifty-eight, observing that he had thereby "resolved a lot of things and completed something important"; in almost the same language, a man of fifty said that he had "done something important" when he became proficient enough in his hobby of electronics to tutor others. Overcoming her lifelong fear of water, one woman learned to swim at the age of forty-five. "One day her family went to the pool, and she just jumped in," Kessler says. "This was a very powerful experience for her, not because she wanted to be a lifeguard but because she had mastered her anxiety as well as a new skill."

Even an apparently negative turning point can have benefits. Quite a few of Kessler's subjects, when asked if they had realized a dream in the past year, said yes, "but quite a few said they had given up on one," he says. "When the folks who have dreamed for years about a big summer house where all the kids would flock finally accept that they don't have the money and the kids have other plans, they release a lot of tension. This kind of surrender is very productive, because dreams that run counter to reality waste a lot of energy."

Although all people make psychological transitions and adjustments in the course of middle age, relatively few experience these as catastrophic. In surveys 10 to 12 percent of respondents report that they have had a midlife crisis, Kessler says. "What they often mean is that the kind of disaster that can happen at other times in life—divorce, or being fired, or a serious illness—happened to them during their middle years." An unusual convergence of such unhappy events can push even a hardy middle-aged person

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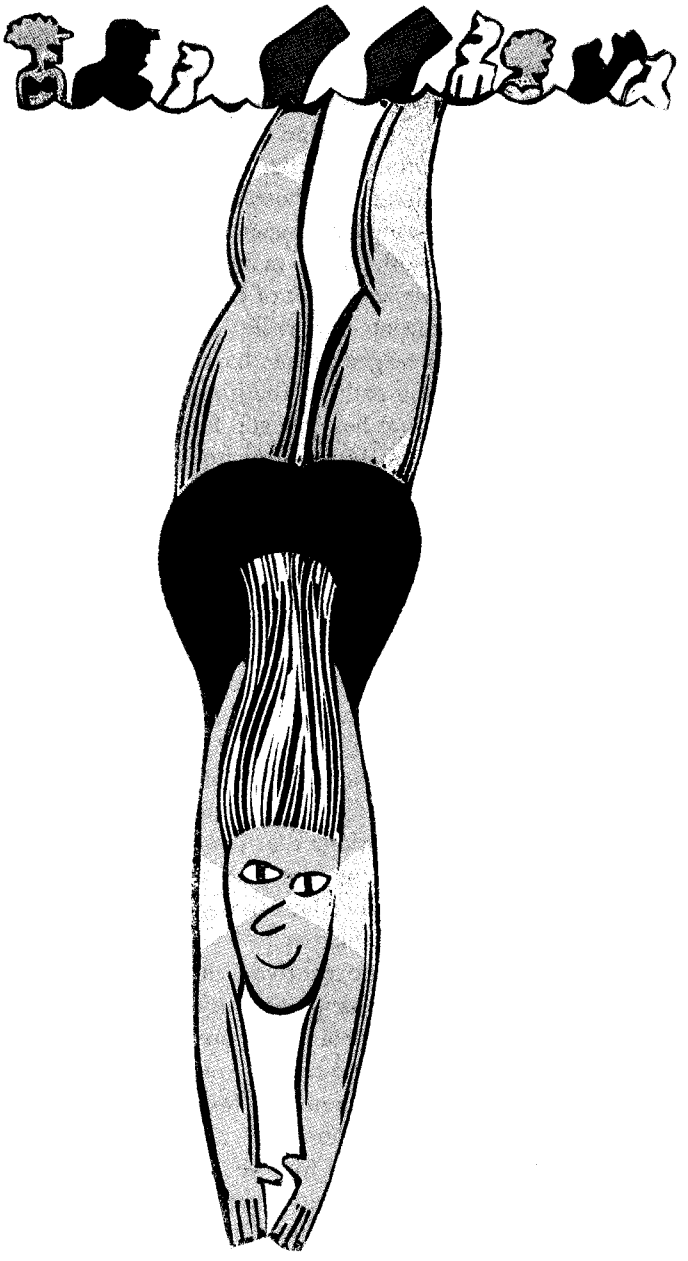

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into a state of emotional emergency. "First you notice that your hair is falling out," Gilbert Brim says. "Then you go to the office and learn you didn't get that raise, and when you get home, your wife says she's leaving." But most of those who have a true psychological crisis in middle age—according to MIDMAC, about five percent of the population—have in fact experienced internal upheavals throughout their lives. "They see the world in those terms," says David Featherman, a MIDMAC fellow and the president of the Social Science Research Council, in New York City. "They aren't particularly good at absorbing or rebounding from life's shocks."

People prone to midlife crisis score low on tests of introspection, or reflecting on one's self and on life, and high in denial, or coping with trouble by not thinking about it. "Take the guy who still thinks he's a great athlete," Kessler says. "Somehow he hasn't let reality intrude on his boyhood fantasy. But one day something forces him to wake up. Maybe he's at a family reunion playing ball with his twelve-year-old nephew and he can't make his shots. Suddenly he's an old man, a failure." Heading for the same kind of shock are the people banking on the big promotion that their colleagues know will never happen, along with those who believe that hair transplants and breast implants mean eternal youth. "Such individuals have to work hard to maintain their illusions," Kessler says. "They spend a lot of energy on the cognitive effort of self-delusion, until reality finally intervenes." Because most middle-aged people have grown skilled at monitoring changes in reality—the jump shot isn't what it used to be, the figure has changed for good—they are spared the abrupt, traumatic run-ins with reality that result in a psychic emergency.

Midlife crises are an affliction of the relatively affluent: rosy illusions are easier to maintain when a person is already somewhat shielded from reality. Just as childhood is often constricted among the poor, who early in life face adult realities and burdens, so middle age may be eclipsed by a premature old age brought on by poverty and poor health. Among working-class people, for whom strength and stamina mean earning power, middle age may begin at thirty-five rather than the forty-five often cited in studies by respondents drawn from the sedentary middle class. Because any fanciful notions that poor and blue-collar people might have are rigorously tested by daily life, Kessler says, they rarely dwell in fantasy. "In terms of career, factory workers are likelier to be wherever they're going to be at thirty than executives," he says. "In terms of mental health, being disappointed at what *is* is a better kind of problem to have than being anxious about what will be. Once you know the reality, you can say, 'I can't afford to buy a boat, so I'll rent one for vacations.' Being up in the air is the big problem."

Despite the lurid tales of fifty-year-olds who run off with their twenty-five-year-old secretaries, such events are relatively rare in real-life midlife. Most couples who divorce break up in the first six or eight years of matrimony, and by midlife the majority report being more or less content. "The family-demography side of the midlife crisis just isn't there," says Larry Bumpass, a MIDMAC fellow and a professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, who directs the federally funded National Survey of Families and Households, the largest demographic study of its kind. "After ten or fifteen years together, the probability that a couple will split up is low. I've looked at the data every way possible to see if there's even a blip in the divorce rate when the children leave home, but that's just folklore too."

Even the nature of the difficulties most commonly reported suggests that the majority of the middle-aged operate from a position of strength. "The problems mentioned usually concern not the self but someone else—a child or parent," Kessler says. "Part of the reason for this outward focus is that the middle-aged person has secured his or her own situation and can afford to pay attention to others. Compared with the issues that arise in youth and old age, for most people the management-type problems that crop up in midlife aren't nearly as emotionally devastating."

Carl Jung divided life into halves—the first devoted to forming the ego and getting established in the world, the second to finding a larger meaning for all that effort. He then took the unorthodox step of paying more attention to the second. When shifting from one stage to the other, Jung observed, people experience an external loss of some kind—physical prowess or upward mobility or a relationship. When they treat this loss as a signal that it's time to develop new dimensions, Jung thought, transformation is in store. However, he predicted stagnation or even a breakdown if the loss is met with denial, fear, or a sense of defeat. Aryeh Maidenbaum, the executive director of the C. G. Jung Foundation's Center for Midlife Development, offers the Jungian rule of thumb for midlife crises: "The greater the disparity between the outer and inner person, the greater the chance for trouble. The most important inner need people have is to be seen for who they are. If that's what's happening at midlife, there's no crisis."

The Change for the Worse

IF THERE'S ONE ISSUE REGARDING WHICH MISINFORMATION feeds mounting hysteria about middle age, it's menopause. After finishing any of a number of recent books and articles, a reader might conclude that for a few years a middle-aged woman might as well choose between sobbing alone and riding around on a broom. One of the few people who have gleaned their own hard data on the subject is Karen Matthews, a professor of psychiatry, epidemiology, and psychology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, who has conducted a longitudinal survey of the psychological and physical changes experienced by 500 women passing through menopause. "The fact is that most women do

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very well in the menopausal transition," she says, refuting the popular image of women who are invariably depressed, extremely unpleasant, or both. "There are some common physical symptoms that aren't fun, notably hot flashes, but only a minority of women—about ten percent—have a tough time psychologically."

Matthews has identified the characteristics of those who experience few problems in menopause and those who experience many. "The women who do well respond to the menopause with action," she says. "That may not be their direct intention, but they end up coping with the stressor by making positive changes. Those who, say, step up their exercise regimen don't even show the biological changes, such as the adverse shifts in lipids implicated in coronary disease, that others do. These 'active copers' say, 'Hey, I look a little different, feel a little less energetic. Why don't I . . .'"

Try hormone-replacement therapy? In evaluating its effects on physical health, women and doctors must juggle evidence suggesting that while HRT cuts the number of hot flashes by about half and reduces vulnerability to osteoporosis and perhaps coronary disease, it may raise the risk of breast cancer and, if estrogen is taken without progestin, uterine cancer. The National Institutes of Health is now conducting a badly needed controlled long-term clinical trial of large numbers of women on HRT which should provide some answers. Meanwhile, some doctors, confronted with incomplete data, tell women that the decision is up to them. Considering the threat of osteoporosis and of coronary disease, which is the leading cause of death for women over fifty, many other doctors recommend HRT to those whose risk of breast cancer is low. Still others regard its widespread use with dismay. Their concerns range from the fact that only one in three women is vulnerable to osteoporosis to a flaw in the argument that hormones can prevent heart disease. In part because doctors are cautious about prescribing HRT for women with illnesses such as hypertension and diabetes, the population that takes it is healthier to begin with—a built-in selection bias that skews studies of the therapy's effects. Among HRT's vocal critics are the doctors Sonja and John McKinlay, epidemiologists at the New England Research Institute, in Watertown, Massachusetts. "HRT is inappropriate for the vast majority of women, who shouldn't use it," John McKinlay says. "Yet the pharmaceutical industry's goal is to have every post-menopausal woman on it until death." Having surveyed the literature on menopause and HRT, Alice Rossi, a MIDMAC fellow and an emeritus professor of sociology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, says, "I wish we had a better scientific foundation for deciding if it's appropriate for women to take hormones for decades. At this point there's no strong evidence for a pro or anti position."

Although the process of weighing HRT's effects on physical health continues, Matthews has determined that as far as behavioral effects are concerned, HRT is "*not* the most important factor in most women's psychological well-being during menopause." For that matter, she says, women who do and don't use HRT may report differing experiences because they are different types of people to begin with. In Matthews's study the typical user was not only better educated and healthier but also likely to be a

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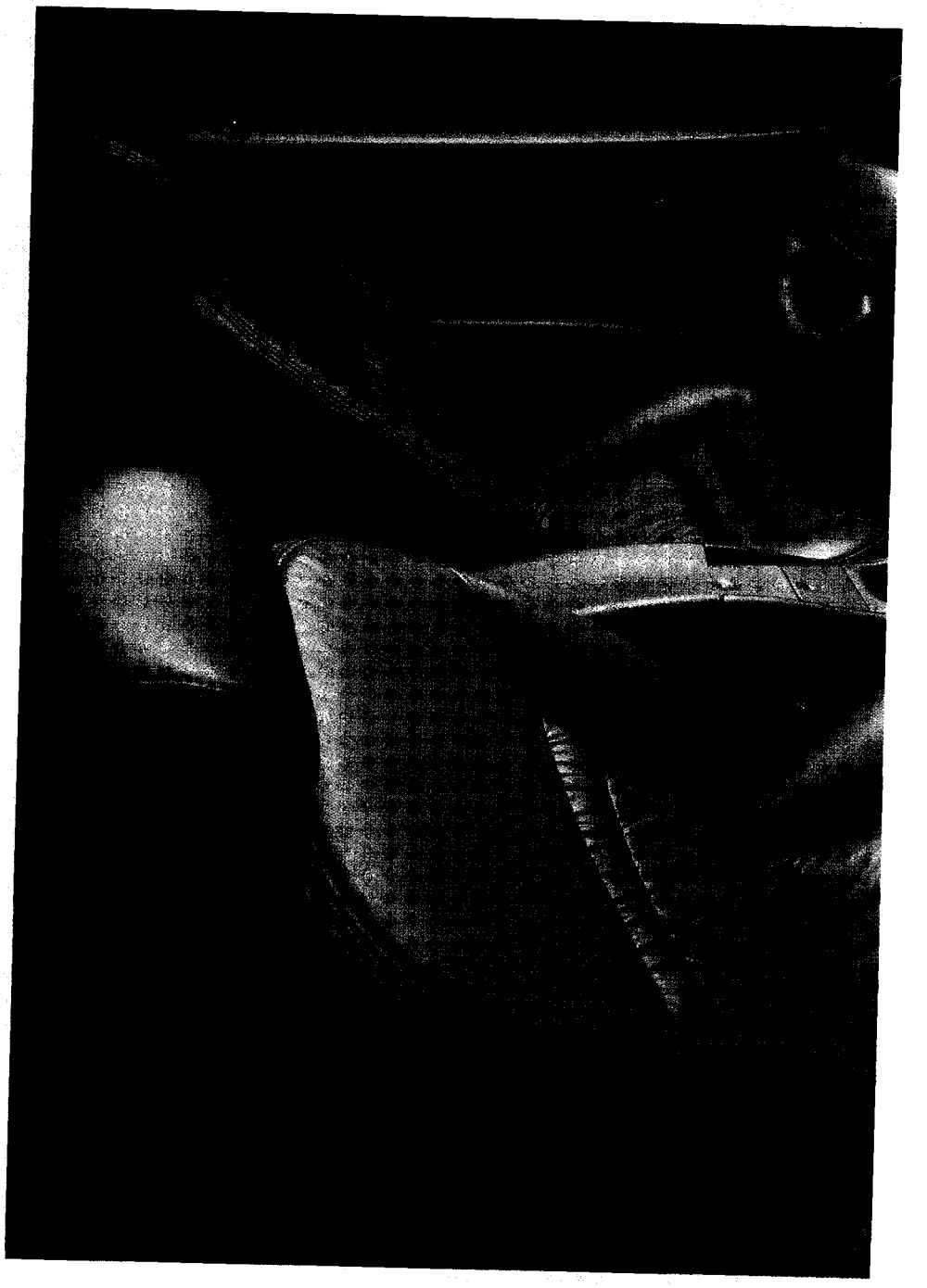

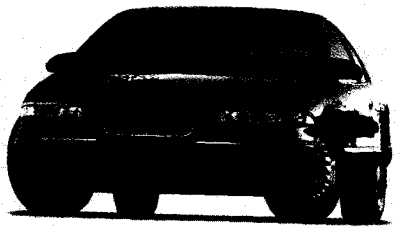

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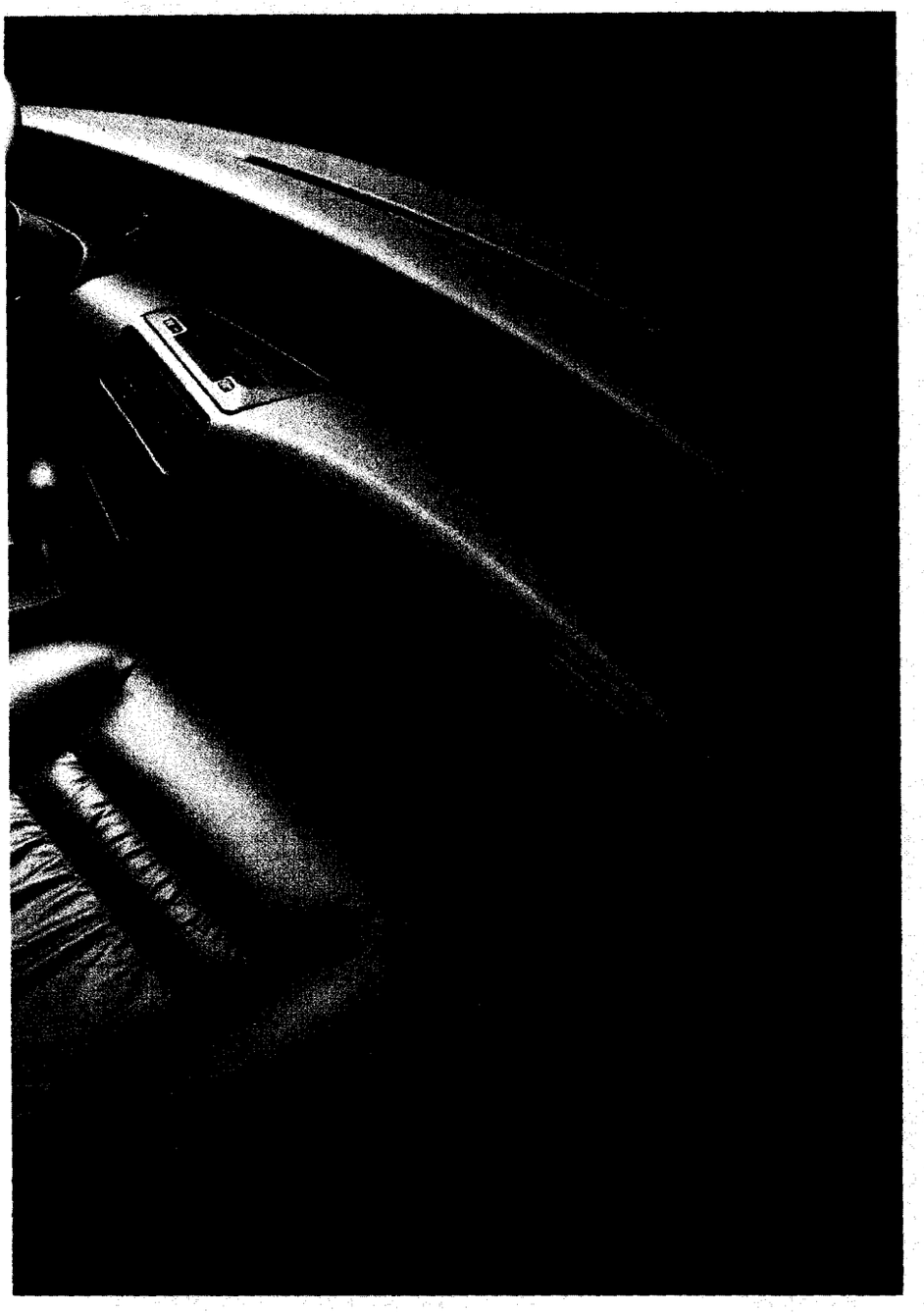

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hard-driving "Type A" person, less content with the status quo. "These women are up on the literature," Matthews says, "more aware of HRT, and more interested in seeking treatment."

If active copers, whether or not they take hormones, fare best during menopause, Matthews says, the women likely to have the worst time have two disparate things in common: HRT and a low regard for themselves. "Women who have poor self-esteem but don't use hormones don't have a hard time," she says. One hypothesis is that reproductive hormones, particularly progesterone, cause some women to become dysphoric, or moody; if a woman who has this adverse reaction to HRT also has a poor self-image, she is likely to be more upset by a stressor such as a menopausal symptom than a woman with a sturdier ego.

"The idea that most women have a hard time psychologically is the major myth our data have dispelled," Matthews says. "Eighty percent of our subjects thought they were going to become depressed and irritable at menopause, but only ten percent did. Those who had a rough time had showed signs long before of being anxious, depressed, or pessimistic. Menopause makes women with that pre-existing set of characteristics, which are not age-related, more emotionally vulnerable."

Much of the dark mythology of menopause derives not from the thing itself but from simultaneous aspects of the aging process. "It's the physical manifestation of aging—and a woman's reaction to it—that's critical in predicting whether the years from forty-five to fifty-five will be difficult or not," Alice Rossi says. "Society's image of an attractive woman is ten years younger than that of an attractive man. Graying at the temples and filling out a bit can be attractive in a man—look at Clinton and Gore. But their wives are still trying to look twenty-eight." Rossi isn't necessarily advocating the grin-and-bear-it attitude toward aging favored by Barbara Bush. Seeming ten years younger than you are can be a good thing, she says, if it means a concern for good health and well-being, rather than an obsession with youth.

Matthews considers a lot of the anxiety expressed by women about menopause to be unnecessary. In response to the often-heard complaint that there has been no good research on the subject, she points to several major long-term investigations—including hers, one by Sonja and John McKinlay, and one conducted in Sweden—that independently show that the majority of women have no serious problems making the transition.

In discussing a recent bestseller on the subject, Gail Sheehy's *The Silent Passage*, she says, "Ms. Sheehy interviewed me at length, but the experience of menopause she describes in her book is not the one that emerges as typical in the three major studies. Some women have a very difficult menopause, and Ms. Sheehy feels there's a message there. We need to figure out why some women do have problems, so that we can help. "There has been no generation of women like this one. They're better edu-

Many studies show that satisfaction with the marital relationship climbs again after couples weather the labor-intensive period of launching careers and babies.

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cated. They're healthier to the point that they now live half their adult lives after the menopause. For them, the menopausal transition is best characterized as a time of optimism. It's a bridge—an opportunity for women to think about what they want to do next."

Despite persistent rumors, there's probably no such thing as male menopause. Men simply don't experience a midlife biological change equivalent to the one women undergo. Whereas nature is responsible for that inequity, culture is at the bottom of a far more destructive one. For a research project, John McKinlay videotaped visits to doctors' offices made by patients matched for every variable but gender. The films showed that a man and a woman who complained of the same symptoms were often treated very differently: men were twice as likely to be referred to a medical specialist, and women were much likelier to be referred to a psychotherapist; men were urged toward health-enhancing behavior such as dieting and exercise, but women rarely were. ("This is particularly unfortunate where smoking is concerned," McKinlay says, "because the health benefits for women who give it up may be greater than those for men.") He concludes that the gender-related disparities apparent in much medical literature may reflect what doctors see more than actual physiological differences. Accordingly, he suspects that when middle-aged men complain of bad moods and decreased libido and energy, most doctors see a need for behavioral change. When women report the same symptoms, many doctors attribute them to menopause and prescribe hormones. "Don't forget that most women get their primary health care from a gynecologist," McKinlay says, "which would be like most men getting theirs from a urologist."

Among endocrinologists outside the United States there is more support for the notion of a male climacteric, in which older men's lower testosterone levels cause decreased fertility, increased body fat, bone loss, and skin-tone changes, along with the same behavioral symptoms that are often attributed to female menopause. While allowing that a small percentage of older men suffer from an endocrinological problem and can benefit from hormone-replacement therapy, McKinlay insists that there is no evidence that the majority would benefit. For that matter, he says, testosterone has little effect on the sexuality of those over fifty or fifty-five, and taking it as a supplement may in fact increase the risk of prostate cancer. Having conducted a study of the sex lives of 1,700 men aged forty to seventy which is considered by many to be the best information on the subject, he says, "There's no physiological, endocrinological, psychological, or clinical basis for a male menopause. Whether or not people believe in it has nothing to do with whether it exists, only with whether the pharmaceutical industry can persuade them that it does. In ten years male climacteric clinics will sprout up to treat a condition that may or may not exist—but, of course, they'll make money."

McKinlay's major reservation about most of the existing research on the effects of reproductive hormones is that it has been conducted with "small, atypical" samples of people who are seeking treatment in the health-care system. "What's talked about in the literature—both professional and popular—is the experience of *patients*," he says, "not healthy people, about whom we know very little."

The Best Years of Your Life Are Over

MANY PEOPLE HAVE A MEMORY FROM ADOLESCENCE of gazing around a gathering of adults, no longer in the green days of their youth yet dressed to kill and living it up, and thinking the equivalent of "How valiant they are to make an effort at their age." Because Hollywood and Madison Avenue project this same juvenile notion, many of the middle-aged are surprised and relieved to find that their lives aren't nearly so dreary as they expected. After analyzing decades of social research for his 1992 book *Ambition*, Gilbert Brim found that a person's zest for and satisfaction with life don't depend on youth—or on status, sexuality, health, money, or any of the other things one might expect. "What people really want out of life are action and challenge—to be in the ballgame," he says. "To feel satisfied, we must be able to tackle a task that's hard enough to test us, but not so difficult that we'll repeatedly fail. We want to work hard, then succeed."

This maxim has a special resonance for today's middle-aged, career-oriented middle class, often portrayed as beleaguered victims of "role strain" or burnt-out cases operating on automatic pilot. In fact, Brim says, most are instinctively seeking the level of "just manageable difficulty"—an optimum degree of effort that taps about 80 percent of a person's capacity and generates that satisfied, job-well-done feeling. Pushing beyond that level for prolonged periods leaves people stressed and anxious; falling below it leaves them bored. Because what is just manageable at forty might not be at sixty, people rearrange their lives, often unconsciously, to balance capacities and challenges. When one does well at something, one ups the ante; when one fails, one lowers the sights a bit or even switches arenas. Brim draws an illustration from a study of AT&T executives: over time the most successful grew more work-oriented; the others began to turn more to their families and social lives—educating the children or lowering the golf handicap—for feelings of accomplishment. The key point, he says, is that neither group was more satisfied than the other. "This intuitive process by which we constantly reset our goals in response to our gains and losses is one of the most overlooked aspects of adult development."

One way in which the middle-aged are particularly skilled in adjusting their goals is in choosing which Joneses to keep up with. "Our mental health is very much affected by our estimation of how we're doing in terms of the

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people around us," says Carol Ryff, a psychologist and a MIDMAC fellow who is the associate director of the Institute on Aging and Adult Life, at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. "We all make these important measurements, even though we're often barely conscious of doing so." Whereas the young person launching a career might try to outdo Maurizio Pollini or Donna Karan, the savvy middle-aged one knows that holding to this standard beyond a certain point ensures misery—or a genuine midlife crisis. Particularly when faced with a difficult situation, the mature person makes a "downward comparison" that puts his own problems in a different perspective and helps him soldier on. Thus the executive who has just been laid off compares his finances not with the Rockefellers' but with those of the couple across the street who are both on unemployment, and reminds himself that at least his wife's position is secure. "The better your mental health, the less often you measure yourself against people who make you feel crummy," Ryff says. "In midlife you begin to say, 'Well, so I'm not in the same category as the Nobelists. That's just not an expectation I'm going to drag around anymore.'"

By middle age most people destined for success have achieved it, which erects some special hurdles in the just-manageable course of life. "Winning is not simply the opposite of losing," Brim says. "It creates its own disruptions." If a person becomes psychologically trapped by the need to do better, go higher, and make more, for example, he can end up operating at 90 to 100 percent of his capacity—a level at which stress makes life very uncomfortable. At this level, too, Brim says, he will begin to lose more than he wins. Burdened with more roles than he can handle, or promoted beyond the level of just-manageable difficulty, he may end up "held together by a thin paste of alcohol, saunas, and antibiotics." Brim says that because our society does not supply many ways to step down gracefully, it "pays the price in burnout and incompetence in high places."

Even those who can sustain Hollywood-style success must do some internal retooling in order to maintain the charge of the just-manageable mode. To keep life interesting, Brim says, the people who handle winning best don't merely raise the challenge in the same area but go into a new one—a sport, a hobby, a community project—where they again find a lot of room for moving up. "Certain professional athletes are good examples," he says. "Because they know that their peak will be short-lived, at a certain point they diversify their aspirations to include family, business interests, and volunteer activities."

So skilled are most people at maintaining a just-manageable life through the years that Brim finds no appreciable differences in the sense of well-being reported by different age groups. Indeed, he says, despite the insistent propaganda to the contrary, "except for concerns about health, most research shows that older people are as happy as younger ones."

Midlife Romance: The Bloom Is Off the Rose

IF MIDDLE AGE IS SEEN AS A DULL BUSINESS, ITS RELATIONSHIPS are imagined to be the dreariest part. In the course of studying beliefs about and images of midlife, Margie Lachman compared the experiences of a group of Boston-area people aged eighteen to eighty-five, and found no evidence that the middle-aged are less loving. In fact, steady levels of intimacy and affection were two of the few constants she tracked. Largely because married people make up the majority of the middle-aged—about 75 percent—most of the data about life relationships concern them. Then too, less is known about other bonds because until the mid-seventies studies of midlife focused on the experience of white middle-class heterosexual men. Although there is still very little information about gay midlife, some data are emerging about how single people in general fare socially during middle age.

It's about time, according to Alice Rossi. "Considering the longer life-span, a person may be without a partner at many points in life," she points out. "We not only marry later today but often have intervals between relationships, and perhaps lengthy spells as widows and widowers." She thinks that the stereotype of the aging spinster who is unfulfilled without a man is heading into the realm of midlife mythology. "There's recent evidence that single women have better mental and physical health and social lives than single men," she says. "Rather than being all alone, they have friends and close family ties, not only with parents but also with young nieces and nephews, with whom they may enjoy special relationships."

As for the married, many studies show that satisfaction with the relationship is lower throughout the child-rearing years that it had been, but climbs again after couples weather the labor-intensive period of launching careers and babies. In Lachman's Boston survey, reports of stress related to marriage decreased steadily from youth through old age. Although divorce and death may account for some of that decline, she says, "people may in fact grow more skilled in handling their relationships." Observing that by midlife couples have fewer fights and more closeness, Ron Kessler says, "Once they get the little kids out of their hair, husbands and wives catch their breath, look at each other, and ask, 'What are we going to talk about now? What was it all about twenty years ago?'"

In his study of sexuality John McKinlay found that only two percent of the 1,700 middle-aged and older men reported having more than one current sexual partner. This figure, vastly lower than the usual guesstimates, challenges the stereotype of the bored middle-aged philanderer. Moreover, although McKinlay recorded steady declines in the men's sexual activity, from lusty thoughts to erections, he found no decrease in their sexual satisfaction—a phenomenon Gilbert Brim calls "a triumph of the adaptation of aspirations to realities." Equivalent data

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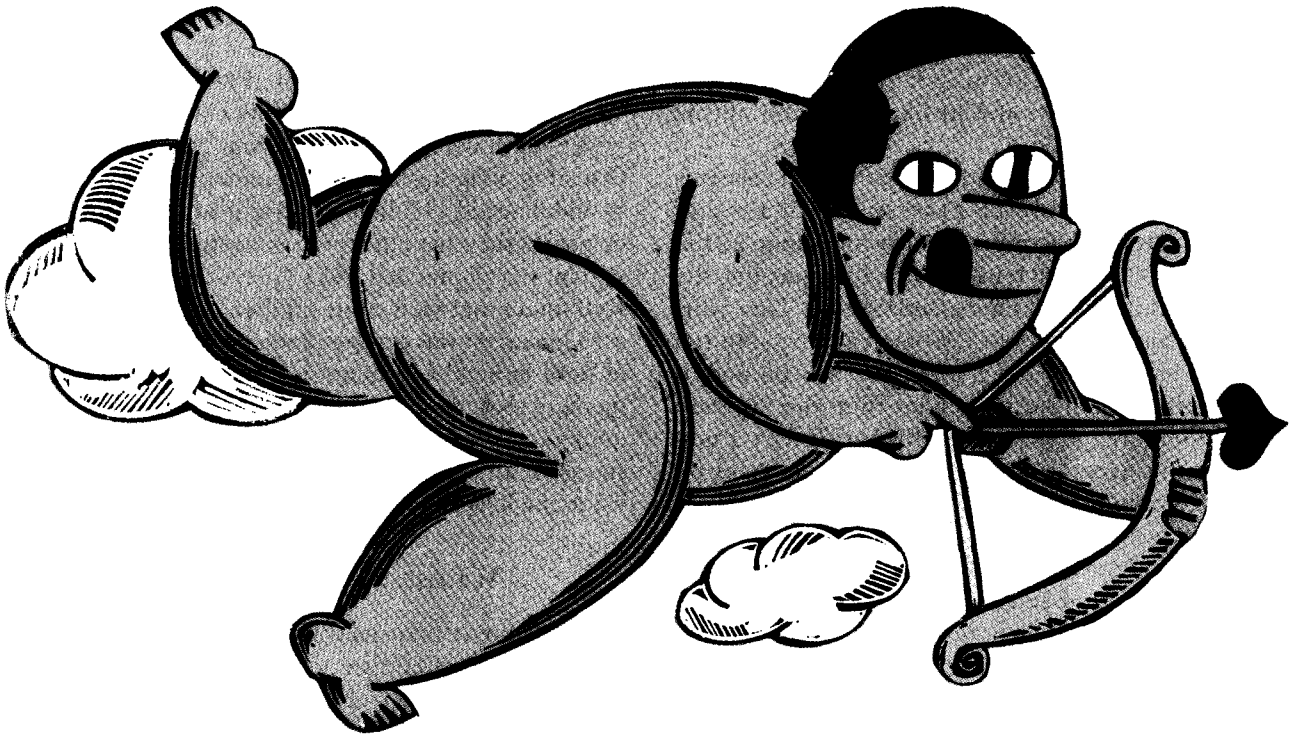

about women have not been gathered, but McKinlay's findings complement other surveys that show that aging has little impact on people's enjoyment of sex.

People and their doctors, McKinlay says, should distinguish between sexual problems caused by aging and those caused by things that often get lumped with it, such as poor health, weight gain, lack of exercise, and the use of nicotine or too much alcohol. Compared with a healthy nonsmoking peer, for example, a smoker who has heart disease has a sevenfold greater risk of impotence. Psychological fitness, too, plays a vital role. A man may think his primary problem is impotence caused by age when in fact his sexual trouble is a symptom of a very treatable depression. "We must not resort to biological reductionism, which is what women have been struggling against," McKinlay says.

Widely publicized conclusions drawn from the sex lives of the ill—that a vigorous sex life is not a reasonable expectation in middle age, for instance—may cast their pall on the well. "When I hear a healthy fifty-year-old man say, 'That sexy stuff is for kids,' I feel sorry for him," McKinlay says. "Only five percent of the women in our institute's long-term study of menopause reported suffering from vaginal dryness, but women are told it's a very common problem after a certain age." Contrary to the stereotype of the asexual older woman, he says, some women feel liberated by menopause and the end of birth control. If older women have a problem with their sex lives, according to McKinlay, it may be that their husbands aren't in good health. His prescription for a vital midlife: "If I were feeling troubled about aging, I'd look first at the behavioral modifications I could make—diet, exercise, alcohol-monitoring, and so on. If they didn't work, then I'd think about treatments."

Having edited a book about sexuality through the course of life, Alice Rossi observes that although the mature expression of eroticism remains poorly understood by science, let alone by our youth-oriented culture, middle-aged people are likely to expand their definition of sex to include sensual, not just reproductive, acts. "If the message we get from society is that we have to keep on acting as we did at thirty," she says, "a lot of us are going to feel that we have a sexual disorder at some point." After a certain age, for example, men in particular may require physical stimulation to feel aroused. An awareness of this normal tendency, Rossi says, added to modern women's generally greater assertiveness, lays the groundwork for a new kind of relationship for older couples—one in which women have a more active role. "If the middle-aged don't feel pressured to conform to a youthful stereotype," she says, "I think we can predict some good things for their sex lives."

The Empty Nest and the Sandwich Generation

WHEN THE ROLE OF FAMILY IN THE EXPERIence of middle age is mentioned, one of two scenarios usually comes to mind. In the better established, the abandoned mother waves a tearful good-bye to her last chick and dully goes through the motions of life in the "empty nest." Accord-

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ing to Larry Bumpass's demographic survey, however, the nest may be anything but empty: expensive housing and a weak economy and job market mean that the young delay their own marriages and are likelier to return home after a brief foray outside.

The more contemporary midlife family myth concerns the plight of the "sandwich generation": in a recent *Doonesbury* cartoon starring a professional couple, the forty-something husband tells his wife, busy juggling the needs of her children and their grandmother, "Don't die. Everyone's counting on you." Women's entry into the job market has focused much attention on a purported host of adults who make the circuit from the day-care center to Gramps's place to the office with nary a moment for themselves. "It's true that there's a lot going on in your life in middle age and you have little time for leisure," Margie Lachman says. "Fortunately, you're also at your peak in terms of competence, control, the ability to handle stress, and sense of responsibility. You're *equipped* for overload." According to Carol Ryff, people busy with both careers and relationships enjoy not only greater financial security and intellectual and social stimulation but also a psychological benefit. The eminent behavioral scientist Bernice Neugarten thinks that the hallmark of healthy middle age is "complexity," or a feeling of being in control of a crowded life and involved in the world at the same time. Ryff found in the course of one of her studies that this quality was most marked among the first generation to combine family and career. "It seems," she says, "that all the role-juggling that middle-aged people complain about actually makes them feel more engaged in life."

Rossi is dubious that the sandwich-generation problem is either new or widespread. "This phenomenon is a lot like the supposed midlife crisis," she says. "There are people who think that spending two hours a week with Mother is a big deal. But the fact is that very few men or women are caring both for little children and for elderly parents." One reason for this is that the "old old" who need considerable care are still a small group, and few of them are a daily drain on their children. Then, too, as Bumpass says, "over the past several decades the elderly have increasingly lived independently. They're economically more able to do so, and both sides prefer things that way." According to research conducted by Glenna Spitze, of the State University of New York at Albany, close involvement by the middle-aged with their parents—usually with a mother who has already cared for and buried her own husband—is likeliest to occur when the middle-aged person's children are older and need less attention. "For that matter," Rossi says, "rather than being a drain, the children are likely to be a comfort and help. It's important to remember that intimacy with children, which bottoms out from ages fifteen to nineteen, climbs steeply through the twenties and thirties. One of the things to look forward to in midlife is the continuity and shared interests that will come as your children in turn become parents."

To the list of underestimated family pleasures Ryff adds the satisfaction that parents take in knowing that grown-up children have turned out all right. She found that adult offspring are a vital if underrecognized element in middle-aged well-being, and that adjusting to how well or poorly they have matured is another of midlife's important developmental tasks. After studying 215 parents, Ryff found that their adult children's level of psychological adjustment was a major predictor for almost all aspects of both fathers' and mothers' mental health—although mothers took more credit for it. "The literature on parenting includes very little on what *parents* get out of it," she says, "or on how it affects their self-image, especially when the kids are older. Parenting never ends."

At Last, the Reward: Wisdom

LONG ON THE PROCESS OF BECOMING, THE LITERature of human development remains short on the business of being. That adults don't grow and change in the predictable, simultaneously physiological and behavioral fashion that children do partly explains why. So tidy is early development by comparison that it's even possible to link certain ages to certain behavioral stages, such as the "terrible twos" and the "temperamental teens." Although Gail Sheehy's best-seller *Passages* (described by Gilbert Brim as focused on "selected case studies that illustrate a theory that has no broad empirical support") advanced an adult model of such "age-stage" development, research continues to show that the ways in which adults evolve are not universal, not likely to occur in clear-cut stages, and not tied to particular ages. So poorly do the middle-aged fit into developmental patterns, in fact, that the huge National Survey of Families and Households revealed that of more than forty projected "typical midlife events," none was likely to happen at a certain, predictable age.

Biologically oriented behavioral scientists argue that at the individual level certain basic tendencies evident at birth or shortly after are the immutable building blocks of personality. The aversion to novel stimuli which becomes shyness, denoted by a low score in extroversion, is one such element. Some claim, moreover, that anyone can be defined even in early childhood in terms of how high or low he or she scores in tests that measure the "big five" traits: neuroticism, extroversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. This largely biological programming, trait theorists believe, means that personality is set in concrete around the time that physical development ceases. Afterward one may grow in terms of changing attitudes, skills, interests, and relationships, but only in ways consistent with one's big-five template.

Environment-minded researchers, including the MIDMAC team, take the influence of things like attitudes, in-

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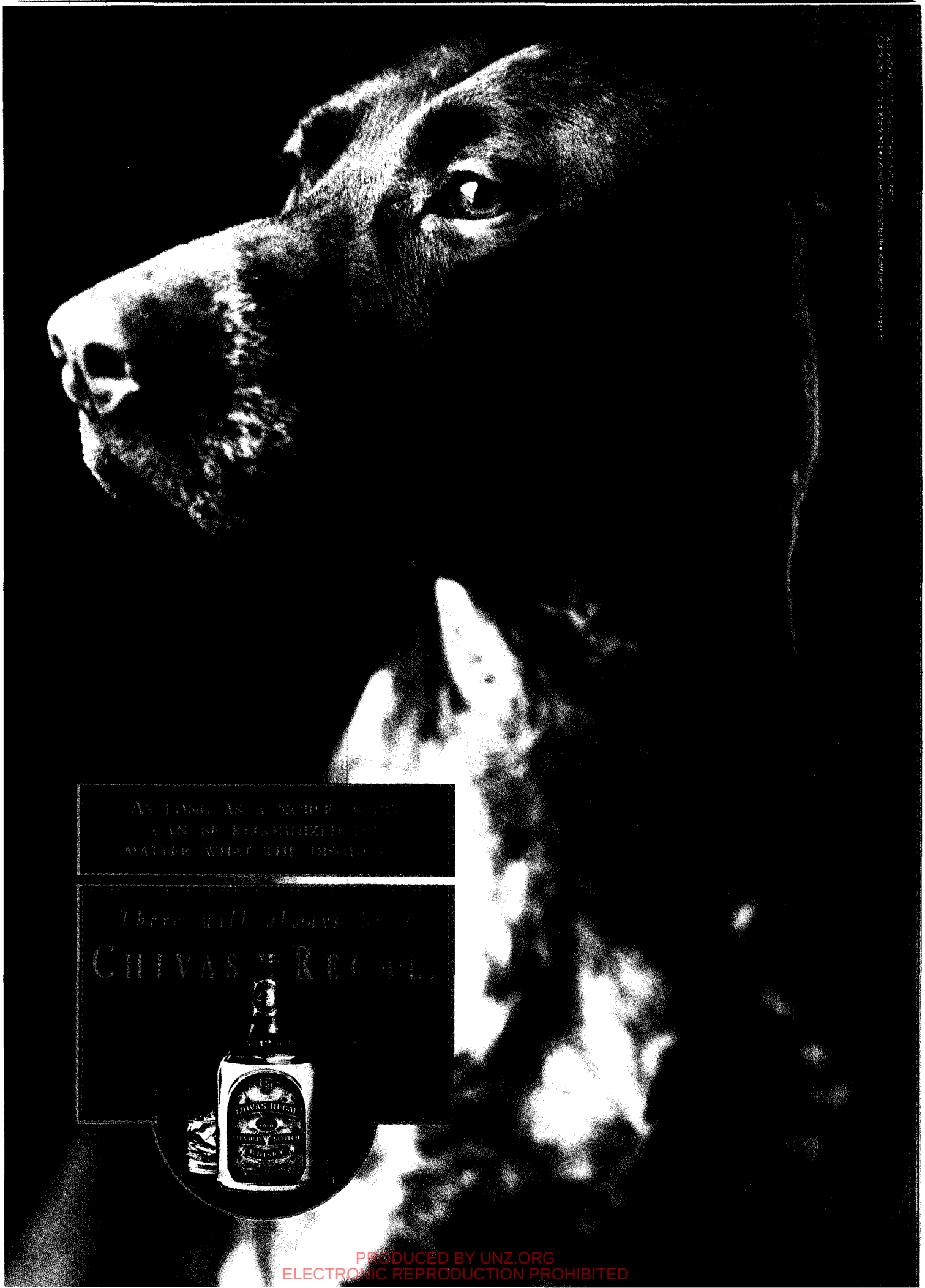

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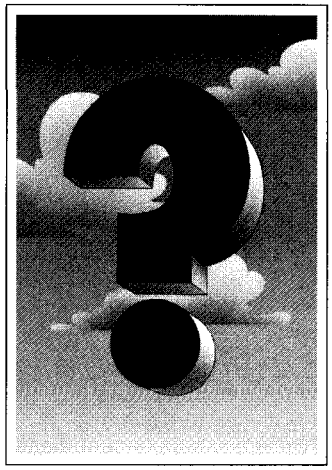

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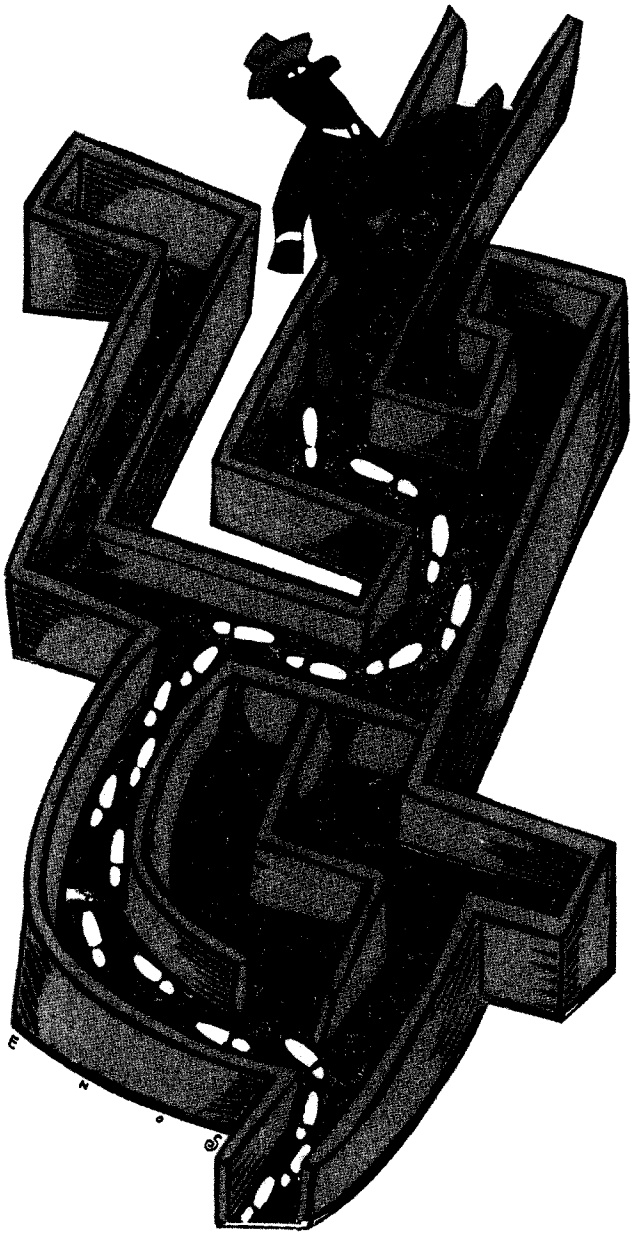
terests, and relationships more seriously. They're working on a different, flexible model of adult development, based not on genes but on experience. Brim and his colleagues don't dispute that someone born shy or dutiful may very well stay that way, but they stress that whether he or she is raised in a sociable or a reclusive family, has a happy or an unhappy marriage, gets an exciting or a dull job, and has good or poor health will have considerable impact on identity. Bringing up reports of "aberrant outcomes"—people who early in life seem destined for success or failure yet somehow turn out the other way—Brim observes that adult change is shaped not just by the characteristics a person brings to bear on life but also by what life brings to bear on him or her, from family feuds to fatal attractions, religious experiences to traffic accidents. Accordingly, the MIDMAC group and others interested in tracking adult development focus on the ways in which, as a result of the depth and variety of their experience, their subjects' goals and values alter over time.

To illustrate experiential midlife development, Ron Kessler points to ways in which people are shaped by the influence of the workplace. "During early life you're socially segregated—all your school companions are also eight- or twelve-year-olds from the same neighborhood," he says. "Then comes adulthood, and suddenly you're working alongside different kinds of people of different ages. You can look around and say to yourself, 'In twenty years, if I act like him, I could have a heart attack, or end up divorced.' Or 'Sure, she makes a lot of money, but do I really want to work sixty hours a week?'"

Most middle-aged adults benefit from knocking about in the world, a process that greatly increases their efficiency in managing life. When they go down a blind alley, they soon recognize the mistake, and save themselves much time and energy. "Because they have all this material to plot trajectories with, the middle-aged are equipped to do an enormous amount of internal reshuffling," Kessler says. "Unlike younger people, they don't have to test everything themselves in the real world. Adults who learn from their mistakes change and grow, and those who don't, don't." Kessler describes a bright corporate lawyer who remains developmentally stalled in the "becoming" phase appropriate to youth: "He goes around saying '*This* is being a lawyer? I'd rather be a kid *wanting* to be a lawyer.'"

Perhaps the best refutation of the myths that adults don't develop and that adults do develop but only in rigid stages is a new body of research on the genesis of a psychological and cognitive capacity that scientists can only call wisdom. As is often the case in science, this inquiry began with the investigation of a mistaken premise. Assuming that the formalistic SAT-type process was the human norm in solving problems, those studying the effects of aging concluded that older people suffer a cognitive deficit, because they do worse than the young on such tests. The more researchers explored this apparently bio-

Most middle-aged adults benefit from knocking about in the world. When they go down a blind alley, they soon recognize the mistake, and save themselves much time and energy.



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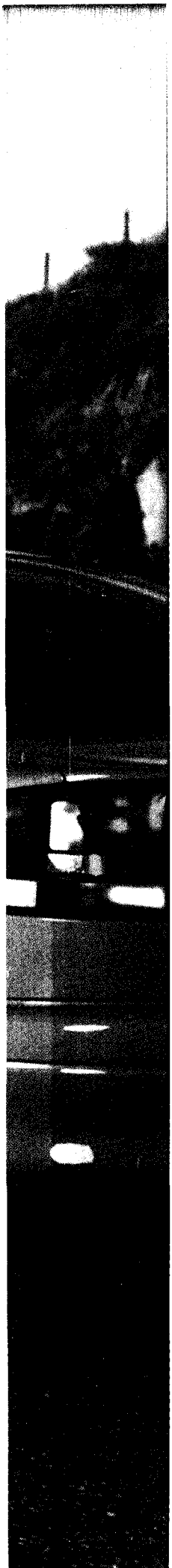
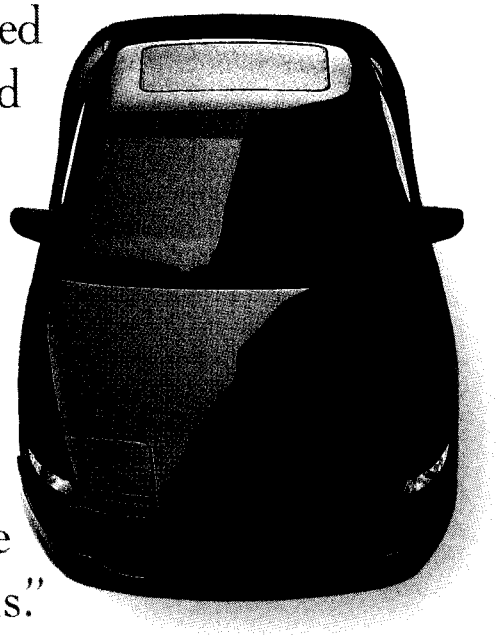


A policeman at the accident, Officer Jimmie Boylan, thought, "She's lucky to be alive." Cheryl had just stepped out of her totalled Saturn coupe. Upon impact, her shoulder harness and lap belt held her tight as the spaceframe of her car absorbed most of the collision. He watched as Cheryl's sport coupe and the other cars were towed away.



The following week, Cheryl made the return trip to Saturn of Albuquerque and ordered another SC, just like her first. And then we started noticing some rather unconventional "referrals."

A few days later, Officer Boylan came into the showroom and ordered a grey sedan for himself. Then a buddy of his, also a policeman, did the same. And shortly thereafter, Cheryl's brother, more than a little happy that he still had a sister, and needing a new car himself, bought yet another Saturn in Illinois.

But the topper came when a very nice young woman walked into the showroom to test drive a sedan. She said she just wanted to know a little more about what our cars were like. Not that she was going to buy one right away, or anything. She'd just never seen a Saturn up close until she'd rear-ended one out on the highway several weeks earlier.

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logical decline, however, the more they had to consider another possibility: people of different ages may perceive the same problem differently.

Any adult who has debated with a bright adolescent about, say, the likelihood that the world's nations will erase their boundaries and create a passportless global citizenry knows that there are two types of intelligence: the abstract, objective, Platonic-dualism sort that peaks early, and the practical, subjective type, born of shirtsleeves experience, which comes later. When asked the way to Rome, the young trace the most direct route very quickly, while their elders ponder: "Why Rome? Is this trip really a good idea? At what time of year? For business or pleasure? Alone or with others?"

The pre-eminent wisdom researcher is Paul Baltes, a MIDMAC fellow and a co-director of the Max Planck Institute for Human Development and Education, in Berlin. Baltes conducts studies of "whether living long can produce a higher level of mental functioning." The cognitive mechanics of the brain—the speed and accuracy with which we process information—are biological and subject to decline, he finds. But the brain's pragmatics—our knowledge and skill in using information—are not. When Baltes's subjects take the intellectual equivalent of a medical stress test, the young do in two seconds what the older do, with many more mistakes, in eight. But, Baltes says, unlike other species, ours can compensate for biological deficits. "If people have hearing problems, society develops hearing aids, and if I train an older subject in test-taking skills, he'll outperform an untutored younger person. By providing knowledge and strategies for using it, culture outwits biology. In all the areas of functioning in which age means more access to information, older people may be better off than young ones." In short, the middle-aged may be slower but they're smarter.

Beyond the commonsensical savvy acquired through daily experience lies a rarefied ability to deal with the fundamental problems of the human condition: matters ambiguous and existential, complex and conflicted, which call for the wisdom of Solomon. Using literary analysis, Baltes finds evidence in all cultures of people equipped to deal with these difficult issues, and he has devised several ways to test for the presence of this ability. In one type of study, subjects read vignettes of difficult situations—for example, a person pondering how to respond to a friend who has decided to commit suicide—and then "think aloud" through their decision-making process to a resolution of the problem. In another type, people with many contacts in the world of high achievers are asked to nominate those they consider especially wise; researchers then monitor how these candidates think about difficult problems. Both forms of testing allow Baltes to score subjects on his "wisdom criteria," which include great factual and procedural knowledge, the capacity to cope with uncertainty, and the ability to frame an event in its larger context. "Those who have these attributes are the people we call wise," he says, "and they are easily recognized. People who are said to have this quality do score higher than others."

To sense the difference between the wise and the hoi polloi, one might imagine a successful fifty-year-old urban lawyer who announces that she is going to quit her job, move to the country, and start a mail-order seed and bulb business. Most listeners will think, if not say, something like "What a crazy idea." But there might be someone who says, "Wait. What are the circumstances? Maybe this lawyer feels that her life has grown sterile. Maybe she has some solid plans for this change. Let's talk some more." According to Baltes's statistics, this wise person is probably neither young nor very old but somewhere between the ages of forty and seventy. "The highest grades we record occur somewhere around sixty," he says. "Wisdom peaks in midlife or later."

While intelligence is essential to wisdom, certain personal qualities predict with greater accuracy who will be wise. Thoreau observed, "It is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things," and Baltes agrees. "Modulation and balance are crucial elements," he says, "because wisdom has no extremes. You can't be passionate or dogmatic and wise at the same time." Just as the Lao-tzus and Lincolns among us are likely to be reasonable and open-minded, they are not likely to be motivated by selfish concerns, at least not markedly so: Machiavelli was clever but not wise.

"At some point in middle age," says David Featherman, of the Social Science Research Council, "we're inclined to become more tolerant of the uncertain, the complex, and the impossible, and even to learn to dismiss some problems as unsolvable or not worth our effort. Perhaps most important, we grow more interested in how our solutions affect others. Along with being good at figuring out what to do in real-life situations themselves, the wise are skilled in advising others—in sharing their wisdom. Unfortunately, Americans' Lone Ranger mentality about solving everything on our own means we don't always profit from this resource." The concern for others that is a hallmark of wisdom seems to augur well for those who have it as well as for its beneficiaries. The evolutionary neurobiologist Paul D. MacLean once observed, "We become nicer mammals as we age." Featherman points out that the benignity integral to wisdom seems characteristic of people who enjoy a happy, healthy old age.

In a youth-obsessed culture the suggestion that at least one element of character emerges only in middle age is both appealing and iconoclastic. "Wisdom doesn't happen at the age of six, or eighteen," Featherman says. "It may take a long time for all of its components to be in place. The timing of its emergence means that in maturity we get a new start—a new way of understanding life that's more apt to benefit others. It may turn out that caring about people is the capstone of the process of living." □

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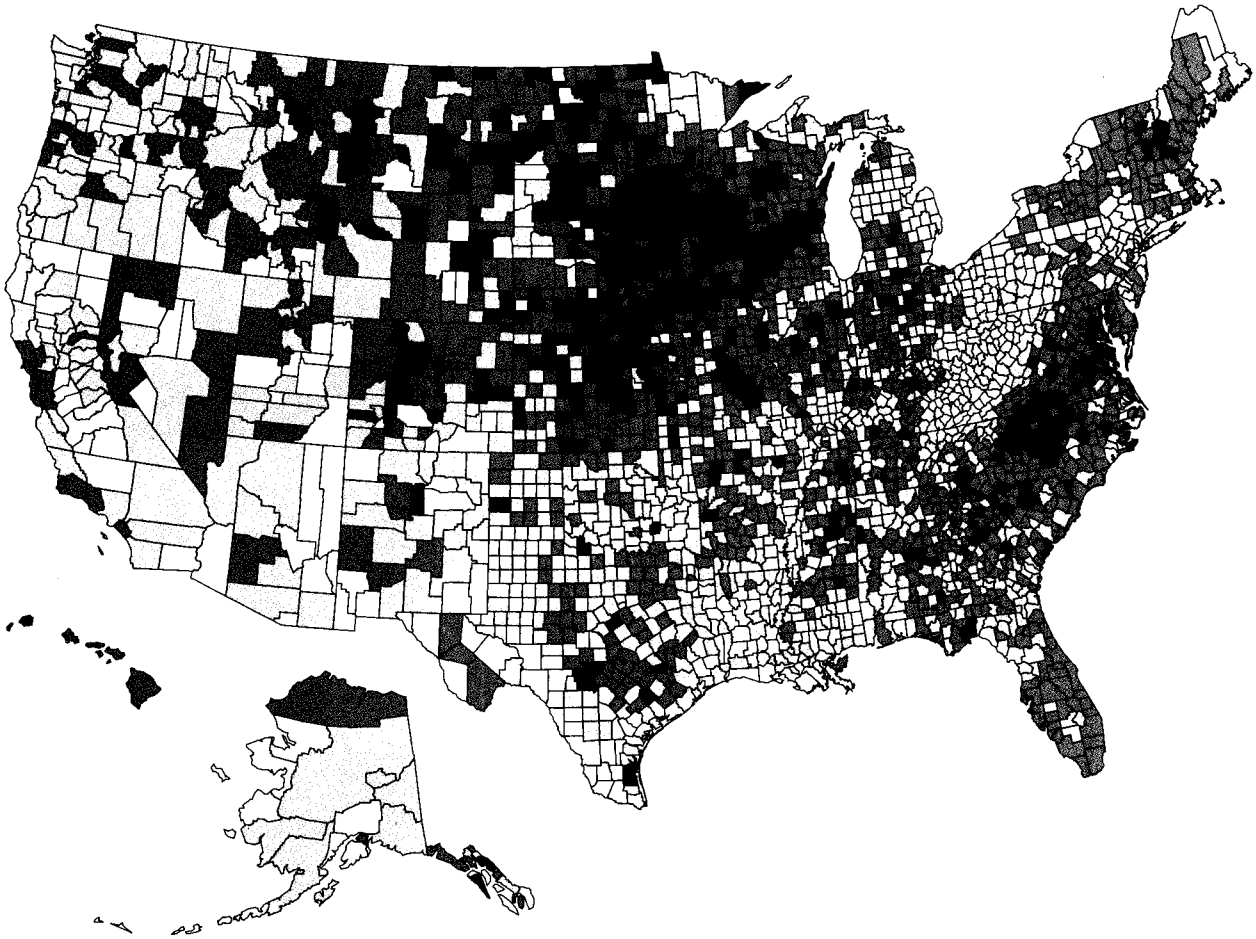
AT LAST COUNT

MOTHERS AND JOBS



DURING THE PAST generation urban and suburban mothers have been depicted in the media as having made dramatic inroads into the country's work force—and they certainly have done so. But metropolitan areas do not, as a whole, have the highest percentage of working mothers with young children. As the map above illustrates, the two biggest clusters of working mothers are in the rural areas and small towns of the North Central states and the Southeast. There are special historical reasons why.

Economic necessity and personal desire impel mothers toward the workplace in varying degrees in different parts of the country, but the variable that more than any other determines high labor-force participation rates is simply this: the existence of jobs. In the Southeast, jobs for women happen to be relatively plentiful. Over the course of the past century the Southeast has been a magnet for northern industries—textiles, apparel, furniture—seeking lower capital and labor costs. These industries have traditionally employed large numbers of women.

The North Central states, too, have during the past forty years created economic opportunities for women—most recently in retail sales and other service-sector jobs. More important, real wages in the region have been declining significantly since the 1970s, which has encouraged mothers to enter the job market to offset declines in their husbands' incomes. This reaction to falling income—adding a paycheck—is particularly common in the North Central states, some economists say, owing to a heartland work ethic that makes people, including single mothers, more reluctant there than elsewhere to accept public assistance. Another factor contributing to the North Central states' work-force profile is the region's large number of farm wives, who, even though unpaid, are counted as employed by the Census Bureau.

—Rodger Doyle

Percentage of working women aged sixteen or older with children under the age of six

- 0 to 44.9 percent
- 45 to 54.9 percent
- 55 to 64.9 percent
- 65 percent or more

Source: 1990 U. S. Census

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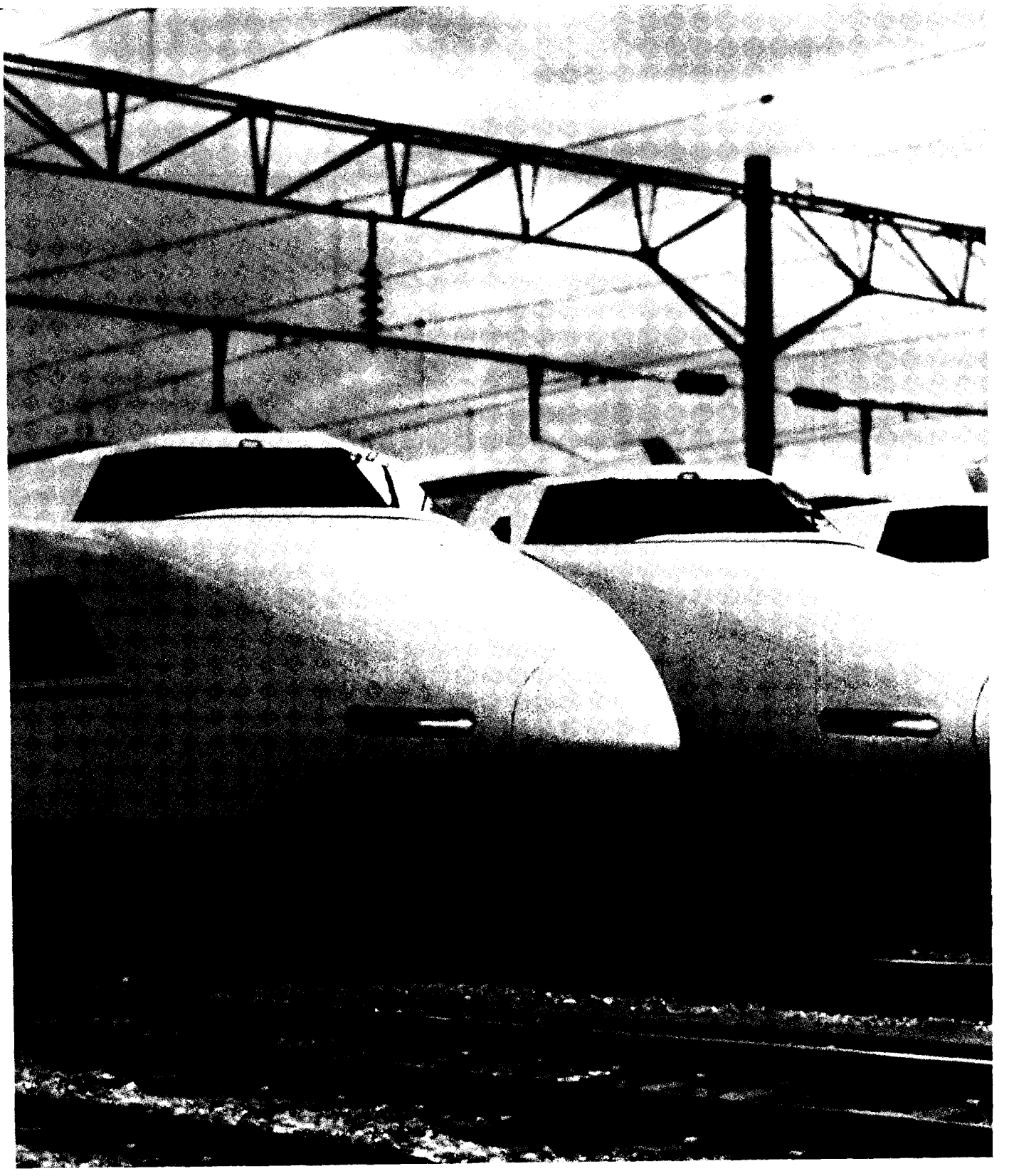

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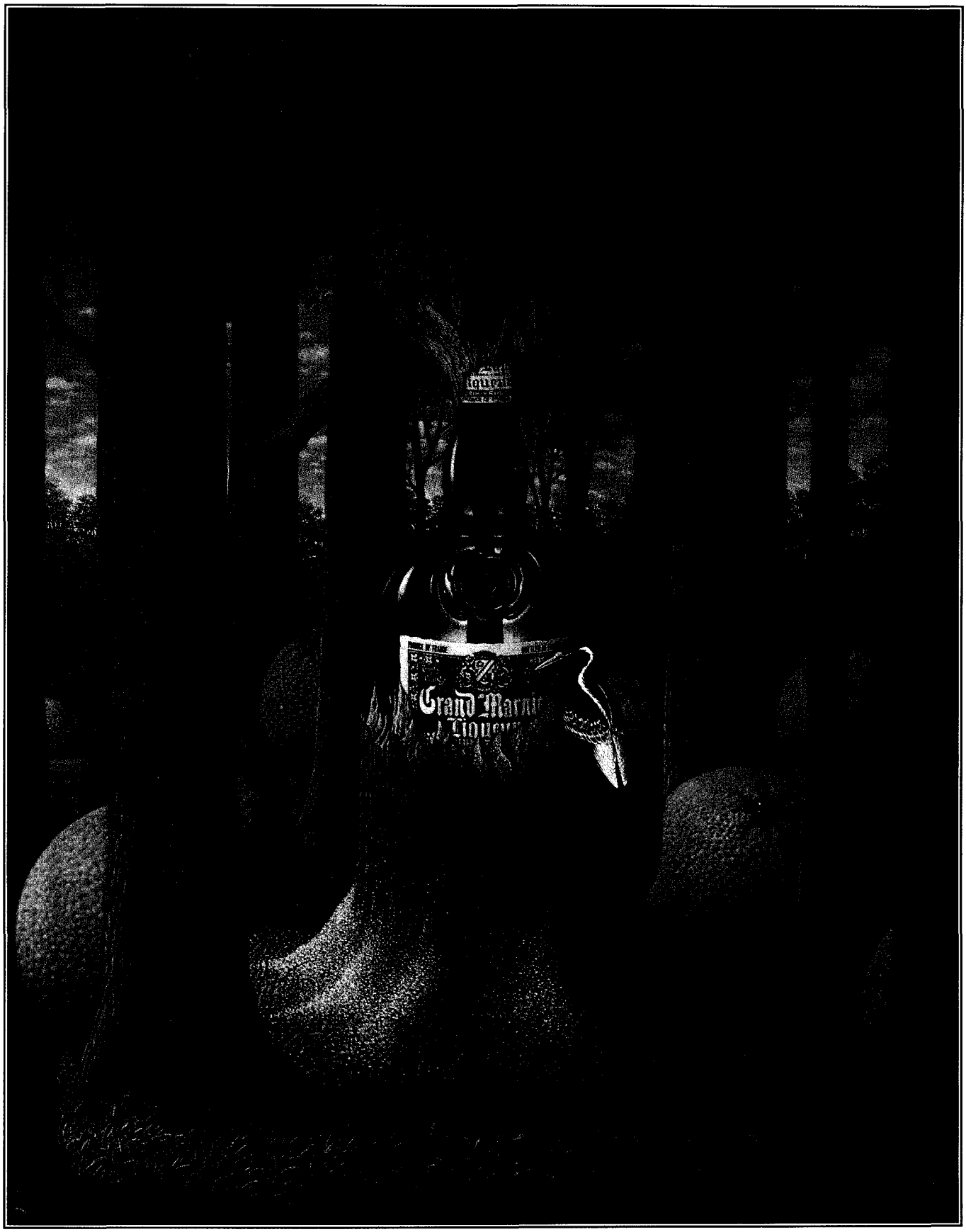

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A Short Story

Marine Corps Issue

by *David McLean*

MY FATHER USED TO KEEP THREE WOODEN locker boxes stacked in the tool shed behind our garage. This was at our house in southern Illinois, where I grew up. The boxes, big heavy chests with an iron handle on each end, were fatigue green, but had splintered in places. Chips of paint and wood had broken off during the miles of travel, and a shiny splayed pine showed underneath. Each box was padlocked with an oily bronze lock, the keys to which my father kept on his key ring, along with his house keys and car keys. I knew that because I saw him open the top box once, when a friend of his came to visit. My father lifted the lid of the top chest, and then a tray within, and pulled out an album or a yearbook of some kind, something to do with the war. The visitor was an old Marine Corps buddy, still active and in uniform. They laughed over photographs and drank whiskey, a whole bottle. I crouched in the hallway around the corner from the kitchen and listened as long as I dared. I don't remember much of the talk, names and places I had never heard of, but I do recall the man's calling my father "gunny," and commenting on his hands. My father had damaged hands. "Look at your hands, gunny—Goddamn it, look at them!" And I think they cried, or maybe it was just drunken giggles. I don't know. That was the only time I ever saw my father drink. That was 1974. I was ten years old.

My original name was Charles Michael, and for the first ten months of my life, my mother tells me, I was called Charlie. I had no father then—that is, he had never seen me. But when he returned from Vietnam the first time, in early 1965, within a week he began the legal proceedings to change my name. Soon after, I was Jonathan Allen; I still am. I learned all this from my mother when I was twenty and needed my birth certificate for a passport application. My father was three months dead then, when my mother explained to me about Charlie, and how I had been renamed for a dead corporal from a small town in Georgia.

I see my father most often in two ways: playing handball or, years later, sitting on the edge of our elevated garden, black ashes from a distant fire falling lightly like snow around him. As I said, my father had damaged hands—a degenerative arthritis, we were told. They were large, leprous hands, thick with scar tissue and slightly curled. He could neither make a fist nor straighten them

Three padlocked boxes, he believed, contained the truth about his father's life as a Marine and as a parent

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completely. Normally they hung limp at his sides or were stashed in his pockets. To grip things he had to use a lot of wrist movement, giving him a grotesque bird-on-a-perch appearance. He rarely touched anyone with them, though he did hit me once, a well-deserved blow I know now, and knew even then in the vague way of an innocent.

My older brother, Joe, and I would watch him from the walkway above and behind the handball courts while our mother waited outside. I was six years old, but can still see him clearly, playing alone, as always. He wears olive-green shorts, plain white canvas shoes and long white socks, a gray sweatshirt, the neck ripped loose down the front, and a fatigue-green headband wrapped tightly around his bony forehead. Black thinning hair dipped in gray rises up like tufts of crabgrass around the headband. He wears dirty white leather gloves. He swings at the hard black ball forcefully, as though he held paddles of thick oak. I hear the amplified slap of his hand and then a huge explosion booming through the court as the ball ricochets back. He runs after it, catches up to it, and slaps it again, driving it powerfully into the corner. His tall, thin figure jerks across the court and off the wall, his slaps alternating with the hollow explosions, his shoes squeaking, his controlled breaths bursting out of him as he tries, it seems to me, to break the ball, or maybe rid himself of it forever.

But it always returns, somehow, even dribbling, to the center of the court. Exhausted, he sits against the wall, breathing heavily, his court gone suddenly quiet, though the booming echoes from nearby courts can still be heard. He watches the ball bounce off its final wall and then slowly roll to a stop. I watch it with him, until it again becomes an inert black ball on the wooden floor.

I said that my father had hit me once; it was at our second meeting. The first had been on that six-month home leave when he changed my name. I remember nothing of that, of course. I do remember his second return home, though, when I was five years old. To my new consciousness, Daddy was simply a figure in a photograph, a steely, strong-looking man in dress blues. I remember the disjunction I felt upon seeing him for the first time, how I had trouble believing that this man was the same man as in the photograph. He was thin and gaunt and silent, with deeper eyes and a higher forehead than I had expected to see. He looked at me strangely. He hadn't seen me grow up. I could have been any child, an adopted son, were it not for my resemblance to him.

What I learned shortly after that first real meeting was the necessity of being a noisy child. Noise alerted him to my presence and prevented his being surprised and reacting on instinct. I began to knock on the walls or shuffle my feet or sing to myself as I walked through the house.

I discovered this survival technique one Saturday morning shortly after his return. I had awakened early and had rolled off the lower bunk, my blanket under my arms, a sleepy animal child going to look for his mother. I walked down the hall and into the living room, where my father sat reading. He had not heard me come in. I wanted to play a game. I crept around an end table near his chair, suppressing a giggle, and watched him for a minute. I looked at the back of his head, smelled his sharp aftershave smell, stared freely, for the first time, at his gnarled left hand holding the book in that rolled-wrist way, and then I leaped out from the table and shouted *Boo!*

I saw a white flash—I was airborne, backwards, on my shoulders and over my head. I landed hard on my face and knees, bleeding from the nose and mouth. I looked up and saw him crouched and rigid, eyes on fire, palms flat, fingers as stiff as he could make them.

Then he melted, right there before me, his body slumping down like warm wax, and he began shouting, and crying, "Goddamn it! Goddamn it, Diane! Come and get this Goddamned child away from me!" He wouldn't look at me. His hands were in his pockets. He walked out of the house and into the back yard. I didn't see him again until breakfast the following morning. My mother arrived and swooped me into her arms. Only then did I begin to cry.

My mother's life intrigues me. Her strength, well hidden when I was younger, becomes obvious upon reflection. I spend a lot of time reading about the Marine Corps and Vietnam; it is a way of knowing my father. And yet I often find my mother in the books. I cannot read of Khe Sanh or Da Nang without imagining my mother at home with two children under the age of seven and a husband across the world fighting in a war, what I think of as a stupid war at that. She has never spoken about that time, not even about the four continuous years of my father's absence, when, my grandmother told me, she would spend at least two hours every night weeping alone, the children already asleep, and when she could hardly sleep herself. Even after my father's return tension and distance continued for some time. Our family was different from others. I can best describe it as being composed of opposing camps—not camps at war with each other but survival camps: my mother and I in one, my father and Joe in the other. We had no open animosity toward each other, only distance.

My father was in the Marine Corps for seventeen years before beginning his second career in the offices of the Stone City Steel Mill. He was a decorated soldier, a career man forced to retire disabled because of his hands. He had been a drill instructor, a fact that always widens the eyes of those I tell. I can see them reassessing me as soon as I say it—Marine Corps drill instructor—and they look at me in a shifted way that is hard to define. A pity, perhaps, sometimes a fear. I do have a temper comparable to my father's, which usually shows itself in short, explosive bursts of expletives that roll out of my mouth naturally, as if I were a polyglot switching tongues. The

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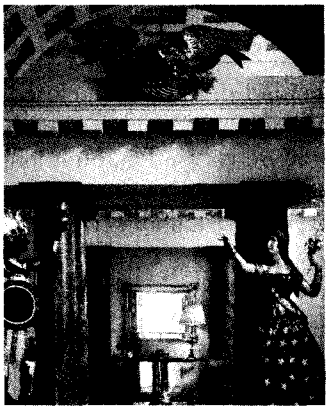

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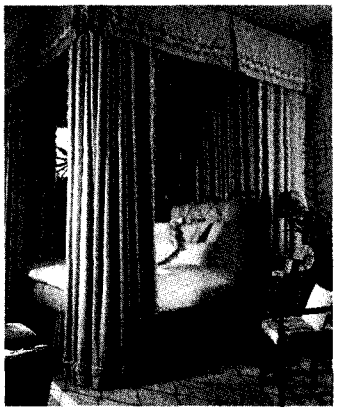

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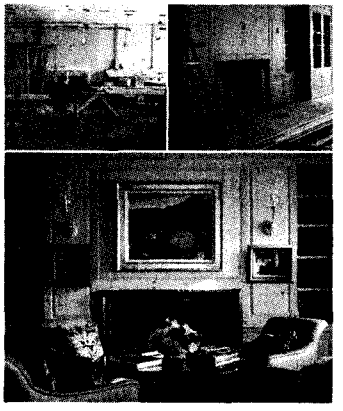

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violence is verbal only, though I can still see my father, if I make the effort, at my brother's throat. Joe has been caught smoking in the garage a second time. He is fourteen and has been warned. He is pinned to the wall of the garage by my father's crooked paw, his feet dangling, toes groping for solid ground as though he will fall upward and off the earth if he can't find a grip. His eyes are wide and swollen with tears. My father's voice is a slow burn, his nostrils wide. He finishes speaking, drops Joe onto the concrete floor, and strides quickly away.

Despite my father's years of service, our house was devoid of memorabilia. A visitor would have no idea about my father's military career were it not evident in his walk and demeanor. Civilians might miss even these clues. Our house was not a family museum like other houses. We had few family photographs; the decor consisted chiefly of landscape paintings and small ceramic collectibles, dolls and Norman Rockwell scenes and wooden elephants from around the world.

AT SIXTEEN I SAW THE MOVIE *APOCALYPSE NOW*. I had no interest in Vietnam then; I knew nothing of it. The film left me enthralled and fascinated, even a little horrified in an abstract way. I came home agitated but still had not made any connection. The epiphany came when I walked in the front door. My father was sitting quietly in his recliner, sipping coffee and watching the Cardinals play the Reds on television. My mother sat on the couch crocheting under a lamp, humming a hymn to herself, our Labrador, Casey, resting on the floor at her feet. I stared at them for a long twenty seconds before my father snapped the spell. "Hey, Johnny," he said, "come in here and watch the game. Redbirds are up five to three in the seventh."

"Yeah?" I moved into the room and turned to face the television.

"What'd you go see, hon?" my mother asked.

"What?"

"What movie'd you see?"

I lied. I quickly named some comedy that was showing in the same complex. "It was awful," I added, to cut off the questioning.

I saw the movie again a few days later, and I saw it anew. My father was in there somewhere, dug into a bunker, behind a wall of foliage, there amid the ragged poor and the dripping trees and the sounds of gunfire and explosions. And when I returned home from the movie that night, he was reading a John Le Carre novel, sipping coffee, the silky voice of Jack Buck in the background describing the Cardinals game in Atlanta. The evening was hot and dry. It would be a hard summer of drought in southern Illinois.

The next day I walked to the library and borrowed three books about the Vietnam War. My summer project would be to learn about the war and my father's place there. Under a hot midmorning sun I skimmed the thinnest of the three on the way home, anxious, as though poised to turn the knob of a mysterious door. At home I hid two of the books in my safest place, above the loose tiles of the lowered ceiling in my bedroom, and took the third book and my copy of *The Pickwick Papers* into the back yard.

We had a large yard behind the house, enclosed by a fence of pointed wooden slats five feet high. Against the back fence stood a terraced flower garden, built long before by a previous owner. It ran the length of the fence and was fronted by a red brick wall about two feet high. The three levels were separated by stacked railroad ties. My parents loved the garden and would labor all summer to keep it lush. Even that summer of drought, as the grass was browning under a merciless sun, my parents kept the garden well watered. From April to September we had cut flowers on the dinner table every night.

I kept a private place in the upper left corner of the garden. It was known to everyone; if I was nowhere to be found, my family would always check to see if I was there reading. Before watering, my parents would always shout a warning lest I be rained on. Although known, it was still quiet and just isolated enough. I would lie down on the ground behind a thick wall of day lilies, my back against the fence, and read, or think while staring up at the sky.

That is where I learned about the Vietnam War. I lay on my side and read for at least three hours every day, softly repeating the names of places and operations, marking pages with thin weeds. If called or found, I would rise from the flowers with *The Pickwick Papers* in hand, leaving the history book in a plastic bag among the day lilies, to be collected later. In the evenings, while listening to baseball games, I transferred notes from the weed-marked pages into a notebook that I kept hidden in my sock-and-underwear drawer.

Within two weeks I had finished those first three books. Upon completion of the third I emerged from the day lilies feeling expert. My knowledge of the war—dates, places, names—had zoomed up from zero. I was ready to ask my mother some questions. I approached her one afternoon before my father had returned from work. She was peeling potatoes over the kitchen sink when I padded in nervously. "Mom?"

"Yes, Johnny?"

"Mom, where was Dad stationed in Vietnam?" My throat was dry. I had never before uttered the word to my parents. My mother stopped working and turned to face me, potato peeler held upright in her hand. She looked puzzled.

"I don't remember, Johnny. Lord, that was over ten years ago. I don't remember those funny foreign names. He was stationed in more than one place anyway. Why?"

I felt ashamed, flushed. "Just curious. We learned a little about it at school and I was just curious. That's all."

"I wish I could tell you, but I don't remember. You

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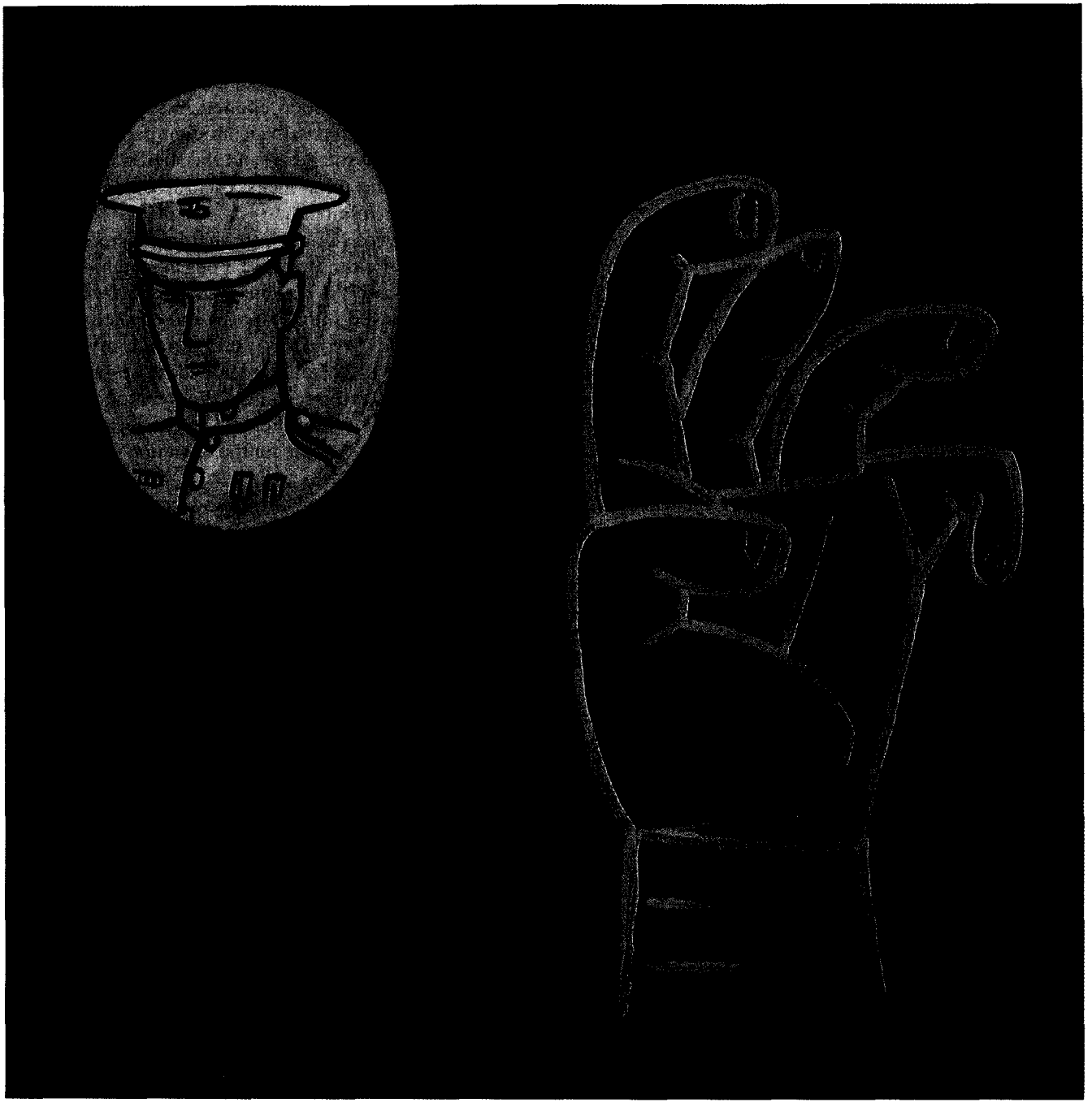

know me. I have trouble remembering what I did last week." She laughed an unhumorous laugh.

"Should I ask Dad?"

She suddenly looked very tired and thoughtful. "Oh, Johnny, please don't," she whispered. "Don't bring it up with him. It took him so long to forget all of that. Don't ask him to start remembering again." Then she looked directly at me, and I could see that she was pleading with me, and I thought that she was going to cry. But she turned back to the sink and ran her hands and a potato under the tap. She began working again.

"Okay, Momma. I won't. I'm sorry."

"Don't be sorry, honey. You've a right to be curious."

THE NEXT DAY I WAS WITH JOE. WE WERE RETURNING from the shopping mall in Fairview Heights, twenty miles away. We were in the old pickup truck he used on construction jobs, trying to cool ourselves with wide-open windows, though even the rushing air was warm and uncomfortable. Joe was eighteen then, and worked nearly every day. I was enjoying the trip all the more because he allowed himself so few days off.

We were speeding down an empty two-lane road through the farmland south of Stone City. It was sickening to see. The corn, usually head-high by the end of June, was barely up to my waist. The ground was cracked

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and broken in places. Some farmers had recently given up. You could see by the dry brown stalks, standing packed closely together, that they had stopped watering.

"Look at it," Joe said, shaking his head and poking his thumb out the window. He had to shout to be heard over the sound of rushing air. "I've never seen anything like this before. Even Grandma says it's the worst she's seen." I nodded and looked around at the dying fields.

"What'd you buy?" he shouted, pointing at my bag. I pulled out *Great Expectations* and showed it to him. He gave it only half a look and a nod. Then he shouted, "What's the other?" pointing again at the bag. I hesitated, but pulled out *Dispatches*, by Michael Herr. Joe grabbed it and began reading the back cover, completely ignoring the road. We began to drift across the center line into the oncoming lane. I reached over and gave the wheel a slight pull to the right. Joe looked up and grinned. He continued reading, now flicking his eyes up every few seconds.

"Vietnam?" he shouted. "What'd you buy this for?" I shrugged. Joe rolled up his window and motioned for me to do the same. The cab was suddenly very quiet. I looked over and watched a red-winged blackbird light upon a fence post. Joe nearly whispered, "What'd you buy this for?"

"Just curious. I've been reading some history of the war."

"Does Dad know?"

"No."

"Mom?"

"Only a little. Not about my reading." Joe looked down the road. We were already baking in the closed, quiet cabin.

"Just watch out. Keep it to yourself." He threw the book into my lap.

"What do you remember about the war?"

"Hell, not much. I remember Dad coming home, hands all screwed up. Quiet, but I hadn't seen him in so long that I don't remember him being different or anything. Maybe quieter. I don't know. I was only seven. And I remember the POW-MIA sticker. Never understood that until I was in high school. We had a bumper sticker on the old green Impala. Remember?"

"No."

"Well, that's all I remember, really. I never took too much interest. I figured he'd tell us if he wanted to."

"Weren't you ever curious?"

"No, not too much. It seemed all bad and ancient history. Water under the bridge and all that. Jesus, I got to roll this window down!"

I considered asking Joe what he thought about my plan, but didn't. I had decided after talking to my mother that I was going to get into the locker boxes, though I had yet to figure out how. My father was in the garden nearly every day after work, and saw the boxes while getting tools or the hose. Obviously, I needed the keys.

I EXAMINED THE BOXES THE NEXT MORNING. THEY were stacked in a corner next to a small worktable. Coffee cans full of paintbrushes and nails and loose nuts and bolts stood on top of them. As far as I knew, they hadn't been opened in six years. Spider webs were constructed with a confident permanence between the sides of the boxes and the shed walls. I gave a cursory tug at the three locks, each of which had been scratched with a number.

The locks were the common hardware-store variety that always come with two keys. I began searching for the extras in the drawers in the tool shed. In the days that followed, I rummaged through boxes and cleaned the attic over the garage. I carefully went through my father's dresser, with no luck. I did find one loose key at the bottom of a toolbox, and raced out to the shed to try it, but it wouldn't even slide into the core of the locks. I would have to take the risky route for the operation. The useless old key would help.

I spent three scorching days in the garden reading *Dispatches* and an oral history of the war while I looked for the courage necessary to put the plan into effect. The plan was simple, but I wasn't certain it was safe. I would switch the old key I'd found for one from the key ring, rummage a box and switch the key for a second the following day, and then switch the one after that, for a three-day operation.

The next morning I rose as early as my father, much to his and my mother's surprise. My mother was in the kitchen scrambling eggs, and my father was in the shower, as I'd hoped. I slipped into their bedroom and with nervous, fumbling fingers forced the key numbered one off the key ring, replacing it with my found key. The key ring was tight, and I slipped in my haste, gouging my index finger in doing so. I left the bedroom with my slightly bleeding finger in my mouth, jamming it into my pocket as I passed my mother in the kitchen.

Later, quietly, with an archaeologist's caution, I removed the coffee cans from the top box and set them on the worktable. I then slipped in the key and flicked open the lock. Despite the heat, I felt a shiver through my back and shoulders, my body reminding me that I was crossing some line of knowledge, transgressing some boundary of my father's. My hands shook and I held my breath as I lifted the lid.

The first thing I saw was a yellowed newspaper clipping: the death of James Dean, carefully cut to keep the date intact. I read the whole article with interest. I knew nothing of his death. Then I saw my mother's high school diploma, class of 1955. Stacks of old photographs. Family snapshots, black-and-white with wavy white borders. I found my old report cards from early grade school and all of my brother's report cards up to the sixth grade. I found a baked-clay saucer with a tiny handprint pressed into it, and "Johnny 1968" scratched on the back. It was all interesting, but not my reason for the risk, so I lifted out

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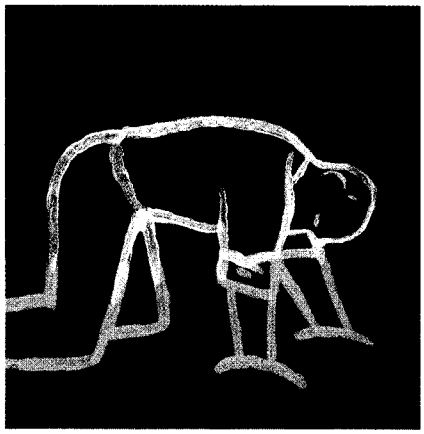
the tray full of family memorabilia and set it to one side.

Underneath I found uniforms. Dress blues neatly pressed and folded. A shoeshine kit. A drill instructor's Smokey the Bear hat. Little plastic bags full of Marine Corps emblem pins like the one on the hat. A tan uniform. And the yearbook my father had pulled out six years before for his visitor. It was a thin platoon book dated 1964, San Diego. I flipped slowly through the black-and-white photos, looking for pictures of my father. The photos were mostly head shots of similar-looking boys in dress blues and white hats. I found action shots of boot training, of the mess hall, of track-and-field competitions. I saw my father here and there, leading a parade, demonstrating a hand-to-hand hold. He was still youthful and very muscular, stern-looking but not weary. The picture of him in his dress blues was the same I'd learned to call Daddy before I'd met him. His hands looked normal in the photographs, the vulnerability gone, his arms strong and well shaped, like solid tree limbs. Upon looking through again, I noticed small notations next to a few of the photos: "KIA," followed by a date. I was looking at dead men. I didn't know it then, but I would go back years later and find a picture of my namesake, Jonathan Allen Whitney, of Hinesville, Georgia, in that book.



But that was all, and it amounted to little. I replaced the tray and closed the lid, reconstructing the tool shed as well as I could.

That night at dinner I waited for the explosion, the accusation, my father holding up the key ring, his tight voice burning through me. I saw it all, but it never came. Later, in my room, I sorted through what I'd seen and made notes in my journal. I hadn't learned much, except that my mother loved James Dean and was a curator of her young sons' lives. As for my father, I'd found little new except the images of a younger, stronger man.

I OPENED THE SECOND BOX WITH LESS TREPIDATION, half expecting to see my mother's junior-prom dress folded neatly inside, a dry corsage still pinned to the front. Instead, I found the memorabilia that probably should have been hanging on the walls inside the house. In the top tray were three wooden plaques commemorating different things my father had done, all before the war. They were homely little plaques given to him by platoons or friends. His dog tags lay wrapped in a green handkerchief underneath the plaques, "Joseph D Bowen" pressed into the thin aluminum. The tags read "Methodist," which surprised me, since he never went to church and mentioned God only as a prefix to "damn it." I found a pile of old letters written by my mother which had been mailed to an address in San Francisco. I couldn't bring myself to read them. I did, however, find three letters dated shortly after my birthday, and opened them. One contained the expected photograph, the usual hideous newborn, with the words "Hi, Daddy! Love, Charlie" written on the back. There was another photo, of my mother with Joe and me. Joe was two, and I was just weeks old. The picture was taken at my grandmother's house and dated June 30, 1964.

Beneath the tray I found more uniforms. Khakis this time, combat-style fatigues with "Bowen" stenciled onto them. There was also a pair of worn black boots, a canteen, two thick belts, and a cigar box full of uniform ribbons and their matching medals. Vietnam service, the crossed rifles for marksmanship, and others. There was an unexpected find: a Purple Heart. He'd been wounded. I wondered where. His hands, perhaps, or the fairly large scar on his left thigh —a childhood farming accident, he'd told us. I was staring at the medal, trying to open my imagination, when I heard the back door of the house swing out and bang against the siding. I threw the medal back into the box, and the box into the locker, and hurriedly shoved everything else inside. I pushed on the lock as the footsteps left the patio, and heaved the first box back on top. I was arranging the coffee cans when Joe walked in. "Hey, what are you doing?" he said. I was sweating, but felt a twitching relief that it was only Joe.

"Looking for a nut. I need one for my bicycle." I dumped one can over and began sifting through the dirty nuts and bolts. Joe walked around me, glanced down at the wall, and began sifting through the pile with me. "I need one for the seat," I told him. He quickly handed me a nut. "That'll do it," he said, and then added, "Hear what happened?"

"What?"

"Some old farmer set his fields on fire this morning. Acres and acres are burning like hell."

"Where?"

"Just east of town, off one-eleven. You can see smoke from the front yard. I thought we could drive out and see it."

"Why'd he do it?"

"I don't know. Just mad, probably. Wasn't doing him any good, dying there in front of him."

It wasn't much to see, really. The flames weren't huge, just crawling slowly across the field of dry stalks, crackling softly. Large glowing leaves swirled into the sky and became flocks of black birds in erratic flight. A few other people had pulled over to watch from the highway before a patrolman came slowly by and moved them along. Joe asked him if the fire department would put it out, and he

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said no, that it was no real danger, though the farmer would be fined or something. He said it would burn itself out in a day or so. We saw a man near the farmhouse, about a hundred yards from the road. He was old, wearing a red baseball cap, sitting on a tractor watching the wall of black smoke rise from the field. "Probably him," Joe said.

THAT NIGHT MY FATHER CAME HOME WITH TWO tickets to a Cardinals game against the Mets. "Box seats," he said, dropping them onto the table. He was as excited as we ever saw him, shining eyes and a slight smile, nothing showy or too expressive. "Let's go, Johnny."

From the car I watched the thin sheet of black smoke rising harmlessly like a veil on the horizon, not the ominous black plume that comes from a single house burning. I told my father about Joe and me driving out to see the fire and about the old man on the tractor. My father just shook his head. We were driving by his office at the steel mill, a different kind of fire and smoke shooting from the stacks. "Poor old man" was all he said.

I kept looking at the keys hanging from the steering column, expecting a wave of recognition to light up his face any second. I couldn't imagine how he would react, though I considered anger to be the best guess. What I was doing was wrong; I knew that and felt bad about it, especially since he was in such a good mood. His face was relaxed and peaceful, and he was smiling. He'd fought in a war; he'd been wounded in some unknown place; his hands gripped the steering wheel like arthritic talons; his friends had been killed and his sons had grown without him. I imagined him weathering bitter nights; he was driving us to a baseball game, sliding easily through traffic. I kept glancing at his profile, the thinning hair touched with gray, the deep circles under his eyes, the rounded nose—my nose. We were crossing the Mississippi River on the Poplar Street Bridge. The Arch was a bright filament in the afternoon sun. The river was remarkably low, looking as though you could simply wade across the once unswimmable, strong-currented distance. I considered telling my father everything right then. I was consumed by guilt, tapping my fingers on my leg. "What happened to your finger?" he asked.

"Nothing. Caught it on a nail in the tool shed. I was looking for a key to my old bike lock." I'd had that excuse saved for two days. I couldn't look at him. I watched people in the streets. He began talking baseball. It had always been the bridge between us. There had always been the gap and one bridge, a love of the game.

The game that night was exciting, a pitchers' duel with outstanding defensive plays. We had never sat together in box seats before, and we marveled at seeing everything so close up, how quickly the game really moves. We talked baseball all night. I kept score; I marked every pitch on the card, like a memory. The game went into extra innings. I didn't want it to end. I knew even then that this was the first time I had ever felt really close to my father. We shared a soul that night, and then, in the bottom of the twelfth, the game ended suddenly with one swing by Ted Simmons, a crack, and a long home run disappearing over the left-field wall. We drove home happy, though quiet from fatigue.

Strangely, he passed our exit and continued around town to the east. "You missed our exit," I said.

"I didn't miss it" was all he said. He was pensive. I was puzzled, but only for a few minutes. We turned onto Route 111 and headed south on the dark highway. Suddenly the land to our left was a glowing pile of embers. We could see little smoke, but the field was alive with orange fires, flickering and rising like fireflies. My father clicked on his hazard lights and pulled onto the shoulder. He stepped out of the car and walked across the still road, with me trailing behind. The unseen smoke was too thick. I coughed and my eyes burned. "I just wanted to see it," he said quietly, and we stood in silence watching for ten minutes before driving home.

I DIDN'T NOTICE THE ASHES FALLING UNTIL AFTER I'd changed the second key for the third. I was walking back through the kitchen when I saw, out of the corner of my eye, a leaf fall against the window screen, break into pieces, and then disappear. I looked up and out the window. The wind had shifted in the night, and the ashes from the cornfield were swirling above like elm leaves in autumn, some falling gently to earth like a light November flurry, except that the flakes were black. In the back yard I held out my hand to catch one, and it disintegrated in my grasp. The temperature was already over ninety degrees. It was a wonderful and hellish sight. Ashes blew across the patio and collected in the corner against the house.

After my father left for work, I went into the garden to read. Ashes drifted down, breaking between the pages of my book and landing in the day lilies and roses along the fence. I felt strangely uninterested in the third box. The previous night had left me content with my knowledge of my father's past. A new understanding had come to our relationship. I felt guilty opening the third box, as though I were breaking some new agreement between us.

The top tray contained nothing of interest. I found shoe polish, dried and cracked, two more plaques, socks, two dungaree hats. I sifted through these things mechanically and quickly, wanting to be done with it all. The compartment beneath was only half full. A musty smell rose out of the box. It came from the clothing—an old khaki uniform tattered and worn, filthy but neatly folded—that lay on top of the items inside. Also within sight was an old pair of combat boots, unpolished and ragged. They, too, smelled musty. I lifted out the uniform and found a small box made of dried palm fronds. It was poor-

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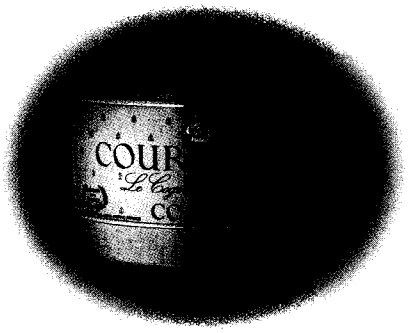
WHAT MAKES A MOMENT

A MEMORY



Courvoisier Cognac 40% alc./vol. Hiram Walker & Sons, Inc., Farmington Hills, MI ©1992

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ly woven around narrow sticks with an ill-fitting lid on top. Inside it were yellow newspaper clippings folded up into squares, and a small paper ring box. I unfolded one of the clippings carefully, so as not to tear its tightly creased edges. The headline read "LOCAL PRISONER OF WAR TO COME HOME," and was accompanied by that same photograph of my father in his dress blues. The clipping was dated July 13, 1969. I read the article slowly, trying not to miss any details. It explained that my father had been a prisoner for just over three years, that he was to be released July 30, and that he would be returning to the base in San Diego within days. He was being held in a prison camp in the North, just above the DMZ, and had been captured while on patrol near Khe Sanh in 1966. It gave details about the family in Stone City.

I set the clipping aside and quickly unfolded the others. They all told the same story. One was from the Stone City paper, dated the day of his release. I read them all twice, almost uncomprehendingly, before carefully folding them and returning them to the homemade box. I was a little afraid to go further, but I picked up the small paperboard box, felt it rattle, and opened it. Inside were teeth, all molars, yellowed and with black spots in places. I picked one up. On closer inspection the black blemishes became legible: painted on the side of the molar in tiny letters was "N.V. 3.3.66." I picked up a second. It read "N.V. 5.12.66." All six of them had dates, three from March third, one each from three other days. I was breathing through my nose in a deep, mechanical way, sweating heavily in the hot late morning. I put the teeth back in the box and set the box aside. I was shaking and didn't want to continue. There was more to see, a few letters, some folders, a small book.

The book was a paperback, a Marine Corps field manual bound with a manila cover. It was titled *Escape and Torture.* I began flicking through the pages. There were some small, meaningless diagrams, a dull text about techniques for escaping from some generalized prison camp. Then there was a section on Vietnamese torture techniques. I began reading the clinical, distant descriptions of various forms of torture. Naked men in small, cold concrete cells, sleep deprivation, swelling legs, tied hands, beatings. A few pages into the text the notations began. They were written in black ink, always the single word "this" in the margin next to an underlined passage. The first, as I recall, described something with the feet. Then beating on the legs, "this." Then the hands. "This" was bamboo splinters under the nails. "This" was a beating of the knuckles. "This" was being strung up by the wrists. I felt my stomach go hollow and my comprehension numb as I stared at that awkward, childlike scrawl in the margin of each page.

I didn't hear my father walk into the tool shed. He appeared suddenly, as though he'd sprung from the ground. I felt a presence and turned to see him standing there in the doorway of the shed, holding his key ring in his right hand and my useless bronze key in his left. I have never seen such confusion on a man's face. He was startlingly angry, I could see, his body stiff, his nostrils flared, his breathing heavy, his jaw muscles rolling beneath his skin. But his eyes were weary, even desperate. We stared at each other while he decided what to do. I didn't move. I said nothing, only watched him. His eyes welled, and bright molten tears ran down his cheeks. Then he dropped the single key and walked away.

I rose and walked out of the dark shed into the hot sun and falling ashes. He was sitting on the edge of the garden with his head down and his eyes closed as if in prayer, his hands lying loose and unattached in his lap. He then moved them to his sides and began clawing at the dry dirt in the garden until he had dug two holes and half buried each hand under the loose dirt. He sat as still as a memorial statue, and I realized that I didn't belong there. I left him with his head down and eyes closed, and walked into the house. I see him there every day.

In the four years that he lived beyond that moment he told me a little about the war. It was a topic I could never raise. On occasion, if we were alone, he would begin talking about some aspect of the war or of his service. These were heavily guarded moments, slow monologues as he groped for the correct words to tell me. It is another way I remember him, speaking the things that he knew he wasn't capable of saying. This is how I love him the most, this great man. Semper Fi. □

OTHER TIME

There was a life several turns before this one
and it woke to these seasons these same flowers this rain
these branches and roots of feeling that divide and divide again
reaching into the ruins into the treasures
and palaces of ruin I knew the way then
to a hundred ruins I could walk to in an hour
each with its own country and prospect its own birds
and silence and in every roof part of the sky
that was the day I happened to be standing in
which no one who had been born there had lived to see
whatever they may have watched from those empty windows
and may have coveted on the stairs that led up at last
into trees
the clear light went on staring out of the stone basins
recalling clouds and I was in the future no one from there
could have conceived of or believed when they imagined
that they would be there in it just as they knew they were
and not as a stranger too long ago to be anyone

—*W. S. Merwin*

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The "Perot 19" control the politics of this historical moment: any hope the Democrats have of building a new presidential majority rests on them, as does any hope of the Republicans' returning to power. And there is a third possibility: Perot himself could run again

ROSS *IS* BOSS

BY GUY MOLYNEUX AND WILLIAM SCHNEIDER

BILL CLINTON'S FIRST TRIP OUTSIDE ARKANSAS as President-elect, other than to his new home in Washington, D.C., was to California. There he paid a courtesy call on the man whose policies he had often excoriated on the stump: former President Ronald Reagan. This was not as surprising as it might seem. Clinton considered Reagan's successful transition and honeymoon a model to be emulated, despite the two men's very different policy agendas.

Actually, Clinton might have been better advised to visit another former President from California: Richard Nixon. It is Nixon who last faced the challenge that now confronts Clinton—namely, converting a plurality victory into a governing majority. Nixon, in 1968, got elected President with 43 percent of the vote in a three-way race. So did Clinton.

Republicans who claim that Clinton is destined to be a weak minority President should remember what Nixon did. He built his 43 percent into a majority coalition that dominated American politics for almost twenty-five years. The central question of American politics today is whether Clinton can duplicate Nixon's feat.

Nixon did it by absorbing the Wallace vote. George Wallace got 13.5 percent of the vote in 1968. President Nixon and Vice President Spiro Agnew used a "southern strategy" to go after that vote. They moved to the right on social issues like law and order, patriotism, and traditional values—and it worked. In state after state the 1968 Nixon vote plus the 1968 Wallace vote became the 1972 Nixon vote. The silent majority was born.

And it thrived. The Nixon coalition of the 1970s became the Reagan and Bush coalitions of the 1980s. The formula was to keep the economy prosperous and run against the Democrats on values. It worked for Nixon in 1972 ("acid," amnesty, and abortion), and it worked for Bush in 1988 (the Pledge of Allegiance, the death penalty, and Willie Horton).

The formula failed in 1976, however, when the Republicans under Gerald Ford allowed prosperity to lapse and did not run on values. The Democrats took advantage of the situation by nominating a moderate southerner. The formula failed again in 1992, when the Republi-

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cans under George Bush allowed prosperity to lapse and ran an unconvincing campaign on "family values." Once again the Democrats took advantage of the situation by nominating a moderate southerner. In fact, they nominated two moderate southerners, just to make sure the voters got the message.

Was 1992 like 1968, a major turning point in the nation's electoral history? Or was it more like 1976, when an incumbent was thrown out for what proved to be short-term reasons, leaving the underlying balance of political power unchanged?

As one might expect, Democrats and Republicans disagree on the answer. Clinton's pollster Stanley Greenberg unhesitatingly proclaims 1992 a "watershed election." Fred Steeper, his Republican counterpart, confidently told us recently that 1992 "doesn't have long-term implications—it was a performance type of election, and people voted against Bush's performance."

We won't know for four years which assessment comes closer to the truth. For example, although 1968 gave the Republicans an opportunity, the Republican majority of the past generation wasn't consolidated until 1972. Similarly, 1932 gave the Democrats an opportunity, but the New Deal Democratic majority was not firmly established, political scientists agree, until 1936. The failure of one party only opens the door to realignment. To estab-

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lish a new majority, a party must succeed in governing.

The year just past looks like 1932 and 1968—election years that created openings for a new majority. The scale of Bush's decline (16 points), the increase in voter turnout, and the exceptional vote for an independent candidate all suggest an electoral turning point. The Republican coalition of Nixon and Reagan has almost certainly been shattered. We can say "The King is dead." It is not yet possible to say "Long live the King."

A lot depends on what happens to the Ross Perot vote. The 19 percent of the vote that Perot received last year was the best showing by an independent or third-party candidate in eighty years. Strong third-party showings usually signal the end of an era. The emergence of the Republicans and the Know-Nothings in the 1850s marked the end of the Jacksonian party system. The Populists of the 1890s fractured the Civil War parties. The Progressives of the early twentieth century presaged the end of Republican dominance. The Wallace vote in 1968 signaled the end of the New Deal Democratic majority.

The implication is obvious. Perot's vote may signify the end of the Republican presidential majority: b. 1968, d. 1992—R.I.P. In 1924 Robert LaFollette won 17 percent of the vote as the Progressive candidate. In the 1930s Franklin Roosevelt's economic liberalism pulled the old Progressive vote into the New Deal Democratic coalition, and a new majority was born. Similarly, after 1968 Nixon folded the Wallace vote into the Republican vote, only this time the theme was social conservatism. From the Democrats' point of view what held the Republican coalition together was racial backlash. Republicans preferred to think of it as traditional values. It was actually some of both—but whatever the exact proportions, a new majority was born.

That majority has now collapsed. To replace it, Democrats can't simply revive the old Roosevelt coalition. They have to build something genuinely new. The 1992 Clinton vote was a start: it didn't look like the Democrats' traditional winning coalition.

The Democrats did best in the nation's liberal belt: the East Coast, the West Coast, and the upper Midwest. Clinton rolled up big margins over Bush in Massachusetts (19 points), New York (16 points), Illinois (14 points), California (13 points), Minnesota (12 points), and Washington (11 points). According to the exit polls, the Democrats won majorities among blacks (83 percent), Jews (80 percent), gays and bisexuals (72 percent), self-described liberals (68 percent), Hispanics (61 percent), big-city voters and poor people (both 58 percent), and single parents and voters from union households (both 55 percent). Clinton got about 40 percent of the vote among whites, middle-income voters, and suburbanites. In those key middle-American constituencies the Democrats and Republicans ran neck and neck.

The Democrats may have nominated two southern white male Baptists, but the ticket fared worst in the South, the only one of the four major regions of the country where Bush came out ahead last year. Whites born in the South, once the backbone of the Democratic Party, gave Bush a 19-point margin over Clinton.

Clinton's vote was not the old Roosevelt coalition, or either of the coalitions that elected John F. Kennedy in 1960 and Jimmy Carter in 1976. It was a liberal coalition. The Democrats have gotten that kind of vote before. They got it in 1972 with George McGovern, and in 1988 with Michael Dukakis. But until last year they had never won with that kind of vote.

At 43 percent, Clinton actually did three points worse than Dukakis did in 1988. If the Democrats want to turn the Clinton vote into a majority, they have to realize two things. First, they will not be able to rely on the South, even if they nominate an all-southern ticket; Clinton did about as well as the Democrats can expect to do in the South these days. Second, the Democrats must make California theirs. California has voted for the Democratic presidential ticket only twice since 1948: for LBJ in the 1964 landslide, and for Clinton last year. California is not a base Democratic state. It will have to become one if the Democrats want to secure a governing coalition. That is why Clinton went to California so soon after his election. He'll be going back there—a lot.

The Perot Movement

THE PEROT VOTE IS THE KEY TO THE POLITICAL future, but it is not clear how either the Democrats or the Republicans can get it. Third parties have typically been protest movements with a clear issue or ideological profile: anti-slavery for the early Republicans, agrarian radicalism for the Populists, political and economic reform for the Progressives, racial backlash for the Wallace movement. All a major party had to do was endorse the protest issue, steal the third party's thunder, and take its votes.

The Perot movement is hard to define in those terms. It was a protest movement, all right, but not one based on a specific issue or ideology. Perot's supporters tended to come from all across the political spectrum. They expressed broad dissatisfaction with the way things were going in the country. What held the movement together was not ideology but alienation from politics as usual. The Perot movement looked like a collection of discontent, not a single concern that could be straightforwardly addressed. It may not be so easy for a major party to steal the Perot movement's thunder.

Ross Perot represented something genuinely new in national politics; the meaning of his candidacy cannot be understood within the boundaries of the debate that has defined national politics for the past quarter century. Moreover, his 19 million–plus votes ensure that the concerns he spoke to will shape politics throughout the 1990s.

It would be a mistake to write off the Perot phenome-

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WAS 1992 LIKE 1968, A TURNING POINT IN U.S. ELECTORAL HISTORY? OR WAS IT MORE LIKE 1976, WHEN AN INCUMBENT WAS THROWN OUT FOR WHAT PROVED TO BE SHORT-TERM REASONS, LEAVING THE BALANCE OF POLITICAL POWER UNCHANGED?

non as an anyone-but-Clinton-or-Bush protest vote. For one thing, from mid-May to mid-June, Perot was actually running ahead of both Bush and Clinton in most national polls—an unprecedented showing for an independent candidate. More important, Perot inspired a genuine social movement. It was driven by two powerful forces.

The first was economic anxiety. Voters who felt that their economic situation had gotten worse over the past four years were much more likely to vote for Ross Perot than those who felt it had gotten better. Fear about the future especially marked the Perot vote. By two to one, those casting ballots for Perot thought that the country was in a "serious long-term economic decline," rather than experiencing a normal economic downturn. Fully 43 percent said they expected life for the next generation of Americans to be worse than life today. Perot voters were even more pessimistic about the future than Clinton voters.

This was not a movement of the poor or the disadvantaged, however. At its core Perotism was a movement of the squeezed middle class, the white-collar victims of the recession. We spent some time last year with Perot activists in Orange County, California. A lot of those we met could be characterized as "yappies"—young angry professionals.

Most of them had voted for Bush in 1988, but they felt that Bush had betrayed them. The breaking of his no-new-taxes pledge was a symbol of that betrayal. What angered them was not the taxes so much as the lying. In Orange County and other normally Republican parts of the country the Perot movement looked like a twelve-step program for recovering Bushaholics. According to Stanley Greenberg, Bush "wasn't on their radar screens." If you asked them what came to mind when they thought about Bush, Greenberg told us, "it would be something like 'stooge,' 'for the rich,' 'done,' 'goner.' Bush didn't require any further conversation."

Of course, Clinton also sought to address voters' economic insecurity. His campaign was above all an economic indictment of the Bush Administration. What prevented Clinton from gaining the support of these voters was the second force behind Perotism: disgust with politics. Perot supporters are deeply skeptical about both government and politicians. We spoke with Clay Mulford, Perot's son-in-law and a key adviser. According to Mulford, Perot voters believe that "the government has nothing to do with their day-to-day lives, and yet they see terrible problems with politics." In their view, "politics is not designed to address issues; it's designed to gain re-election," he told us. "These are the people who are alienated from the political system."

Clinton, a Democrat and a career politician, was at least as suspect as Bush on this score. He may have portrayed himself as a new kind of Democrat, but Perotians didn't see anything new. In order to defeat Paul Tsongas in the primaries, Clinton had run as the son of Walter Mondale, a typical Democrat. Worse yet, after the sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll stories, Clinton came across as a typical politician—slick, evasive, and consumed by ambition.

Perot's status as a nonpolitician was tremendously appealing to these voters. They saw him as a man of action—which politicians, almost by definition, are not. Perot promised to make government work, to "get under the hood." And that's just what his people were looking for.

Disgust with politics had a positive side. The Perot activists we spoke with had a tremendous faith in technology and problem-solving. Both the positive and the negative forces were neatly packaged in the diminutive person of Ross Perot. He advertised himself as a successful high-tech businessman who knew how to get things done. Perot proposed to deal with the deficit and other pressing problems by changing the way government did business. The process would be opened up to average citizens through electronic town halls and similar forums. He would bring knowledgeable experts together in Washington and have them determine sensible, rational policies. Exactly how all that would work was far from clear.

What was clear was that politics—partisan politics, special-interest politics—would be eliminated from the equation. Instead, political issues would be treated as technical problems with right answers. You look under the hood, see what's wrong, and fix it. Perot supporters didn't seem to believe that gridlock results from conflicts of interests or values. They saw politics—forging compromises, building coalitions, making deals—as part of the problem, not part of the solution.

We saw no evidence of a sinister agenda among the activists we met. These were educated people, and they made a great display of tolerance. Women and minorities were given prominent positions in the local Perot organizations. When Perot supporters talked about "us" against "them," they meant the people—all the people—against the politicians.

The agenda of the Perot movement was not undemocratic—but its implications were. For example, a favorite

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If we taught a course this ad would be the first of the first semester

You're looking at a uniquely 20th-century construct called a computer processing schematic.

It shows, albeit in a slightly over-simplified manner, how a computer "thinks."

Or, in this case, how our computer —or one small part of its vast brain— thinks about servicing the loans of 3.5 million Americans who borrowed money to pay for college.

The computer, appropriately enough, is called CLASS.

The company it works for is called Sallie Mae.

And what CLASS demonstrates is how Sallie Mae uses modern technology to provide something that isn't modern or technological at all:

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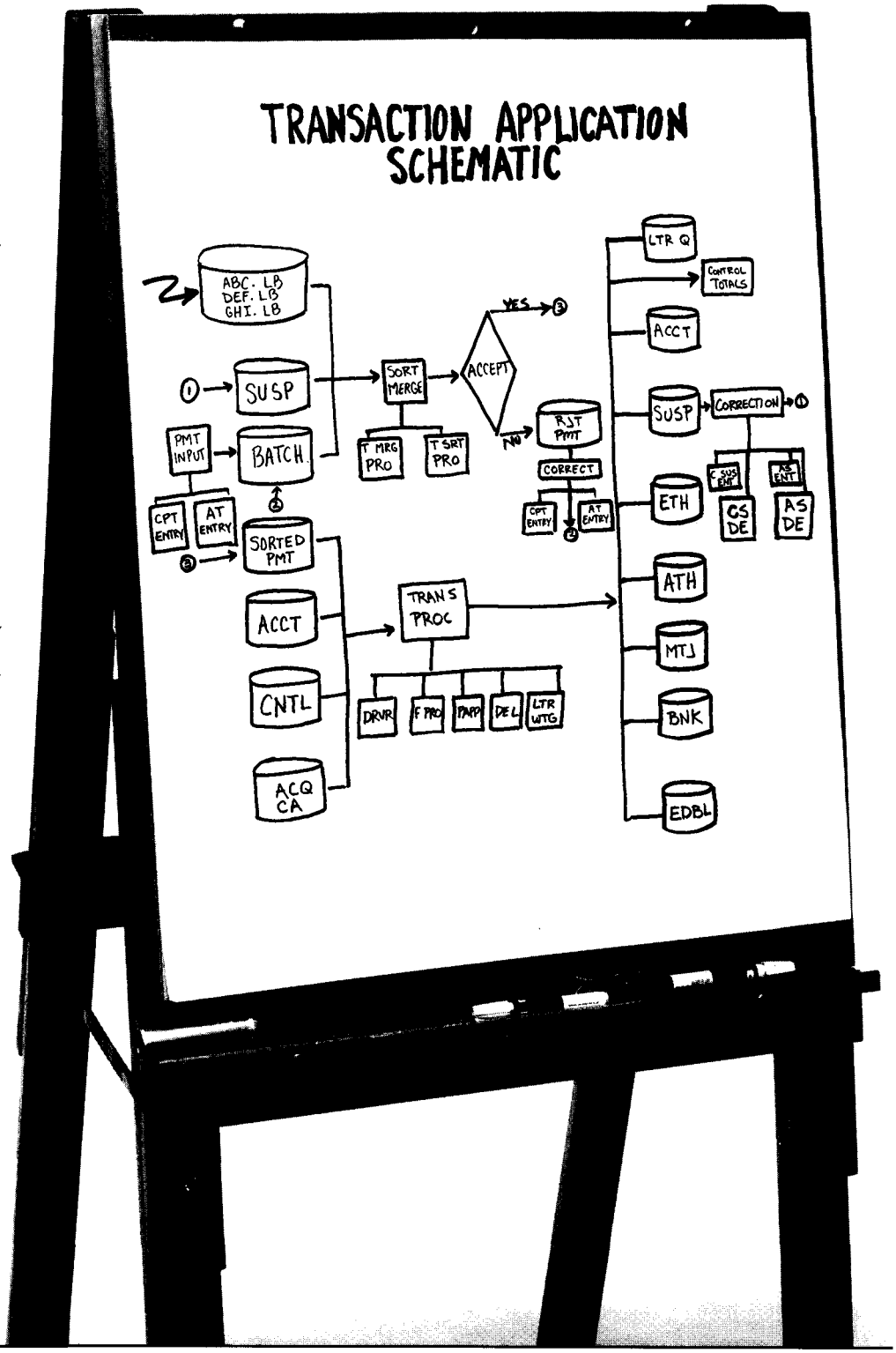
A CLASS ACT.

Strictly speaking, CLASS is not a computer. It's a highly integrated mainframe system that automates virtually every aspect of servicing student loans.

Every night it runs through our portfolio of 3.5 million student loan accounts looking for expiring deferments, loans entering repayment, past due balances, and loans nearing payoff. This nightly protocol tells us who to contact, and helps us spot situations that need our attention.



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in customer service, minute of the first class of a four-year degree.

For example, if a borrower has missed a payment, CLASS will identify that borrower, dial his or her number, then route the call to a service representative who will help straighten the matter out.

CLASS frees our people from mundane tasks like looking up numbers and dialing phones, so they can concentrate on what they do best:

Talking to borrowers, answering their questions, and resolving their problems.

"THANK YOU FOR CALLING SALLIE MAE."

With over half a million calls coming in each month, providing excellent customer service in an efficient manner is obviously a high priority.

Our philosophy here is simple. People don't want to be told someone will call them back. Or be asked to hold while someone looks up their file.

So when our phone rings, we answer it promptly, usually within ten seconds.

We can have a customer's complete borrowing history on the screen instantly.

And the people who are taking the calls know what they're doing.

Before they get on the phones our loan servicing personnel go through six weeks of training in which they learn the ins and outs of student loans.

Even then the training never stops. Once on the job they will spend 15% of their time back in the classroom, refining their skills, catching up on the latest round of regulatory changes, and learning even better ways to serve people.

Borrowers can also get instant access to simple account information by using our automated customer inquiry system. Day or night.

And let's not forget the mail. If you think our phone volume is heavy, you should see our mailbag.

We send out over four million pieces of mail a month, each piece addressing a particular borrower's situation. And when a customer sends a letter to us, we're usually able to respond within five days of receipt.

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Arguably, the most important service we provide, besides answering phones or questions, is called "debt management."

Many of our customers are students who are borrowing for the first time. With this loan they'll start building their credit history, so we want them to get off to a good start.

That's why we provide school financial aid officers with a wide variety of debt counseling materials which they can use with their students.

And that's why we've developed a number of innovative loan packages designed to make repayment easier, especially in the years immediately after graduation.

In fact, last year we introduced the Great Rewards℠ program, a new concept in student lending that lowers the interest rate for borrowers who make their payments on time.

Calculating the interest rates and monthly payments for this and other flexible repayment programs requires some pretty sophisticated algorithms. Made possible, once again, by our old friend CLASS.

When it comes to education finance, no institution invests more in technology than Sallie Mae.

And that is just one of the ways we meet the expectations of the customers we serve and the private capital investors who invest in us.

Whatever America's future education finance needs will be, Sallie Mae will continue to focus the full power of private capital markets—and the very latest customer-oriented technology—on meeting them.

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theme was that government should be run more like a business. We asked Perot activists what that meant. They said, "Honest, efficient, well-managed. Get things done." But when we pointed out that a business is not a democracy, they said, "That's not what we mean."

Similarly, Perot himself was fond of repeating the Three Musketeers motto, "One for all and all for one." All for one? If you pointed out what that implies—no legitimate opposition—Perot would surely say, "That's not what I mean." And he'd probably call you a Republican dirty-trickster. How about the slogan "Ross for Boss"? To them, it didn't mean "dictator." It meant "leader." Their critique of the political system was quite sophisticated. But their prescription for government without politics was hopelessly naive. It was dangerous, too, because it denied the legitimacy of contending interests.

The Perot movement was a peculiarly American phenomenon, with peculiarly American roots and parallels. In many ways it was a continuation of the old Progressive tradition. Progressives, too, hated politics. They believed that government should be based on rational decision-making. The historian Richard Hofstadter described the Progressive idea of political participation as "intellectualistic." Voters, he wrote, "would study the issues and think them through, rather than learn about them through pursuing [their] needs." In his view, "The Progressive notion of good citizenship was the culmination of the Yankee-Mugwump ethos of *political participation without self-interest*" (emphasis added).

The Progressive agenda sounded democratic but it had undemocratic implications. Hofstadter was aware of those implications in 1955, when he wrote, in *The Age of Reform*,

> We are in a certain sense moving closer to the plebiscitarian ideals, the mass democracy, that the advocates of direct government had in mind. But they would not have been pleased with the prospect of having their goals approached in this way, for the means of influencing mass sentiment on a grand scale require the big money and the crass manipulative techniques that the Progressives were trying to eliminate from politics. This brings us back again to a central problem of the modern democrat: whether it is possible in modern society to find satisfactory ways of realizing the ideal of popular government without becoming dependent to an unhealthy degree upon those who have the means to influence the popular mind.

No one had more means to do that than Ross Perot.

It is far from clear where the Perot vote is going to end up. Republican leaders regard Perot's supporters as renegade Republicans. There is some truth to their view. According to the networks' 1992 exit poll, a majority of Perot supporters voted for Bush in 1988. Haley Barbour, the Republican national chairman, believes that the party lost them because it failed to live up to its principles. He argues that if the party returns to those principles—anti-tax, anti-spending—the Perot voters will come back home.

Democrats prefer to view Perot's supporters as Republican voters who have seen the light. Just as Progressives gave up on the Republicans in the 1930s and Wallace voters gave up on the Democrats in the 1970s, so Perot voters have left their ancestral home. All the Democrats have to do is figure out the right welcoming message. Clinton seemed to do that last year. When Perot dropped out of the race, on July 16, he declared the Democratic Party "revitalized." Two thirds of his supporters went to the Democrats, according to a Times Mirror survey that interviewed the same voters before and after the Democratic National Convention. Like the Wallace movement in the 1960s, Perot's movement looked like a temporary refuge for voters who were on their way from one party to the other.

There is another possibility, however. Perot may try to hold on to his vote. In January he formally reconstituted his organization, United We Stand America, as a pressure group. Perot supporters say that it is not a political party and it will not nominate or endorse candidates. It is supposed to lobby for political and economic reform. But the organization is in place, and, God knows, Perot has enough money for another run. All he has to do is ask his volunteers what they want him to do. The answer would be about as unpredictable as the nominating vote at a national party convention.

THE HEN

hungers to whistle. She longs to hear a cry ring out
from all the bottled-up mothers. At dawn
in the barnyard, see her throat squeeze
from the effort, and her clumpy body go up on tiptoe
to reach a higher register. Hear the gravel rattle
in her craw as she croaks her egg song.
She is the ballerina of ballerinas, the queen
of torch, the damsel in distress sure to be saved
for her great beauty, her way with music
and the frilly glow of freedom in her feathers.

The rooster, on flat feet. He feels like a policeman
inside a whistle, seeing the robbers
make off with the loot. While she feels like a wife in port
watching for a ship in a bottle. O anger suffused
by clucking and scratching, O hunger that rings, dashing
itself on the stones of a common indigestion—
or else she will be asked to walk a line in the dirt
so that she might be hypnotized for the ax!
The hen knows hunger is a bag of bones. She has
a straw mattress and an underestimated egg.

—*Marvin Bell*

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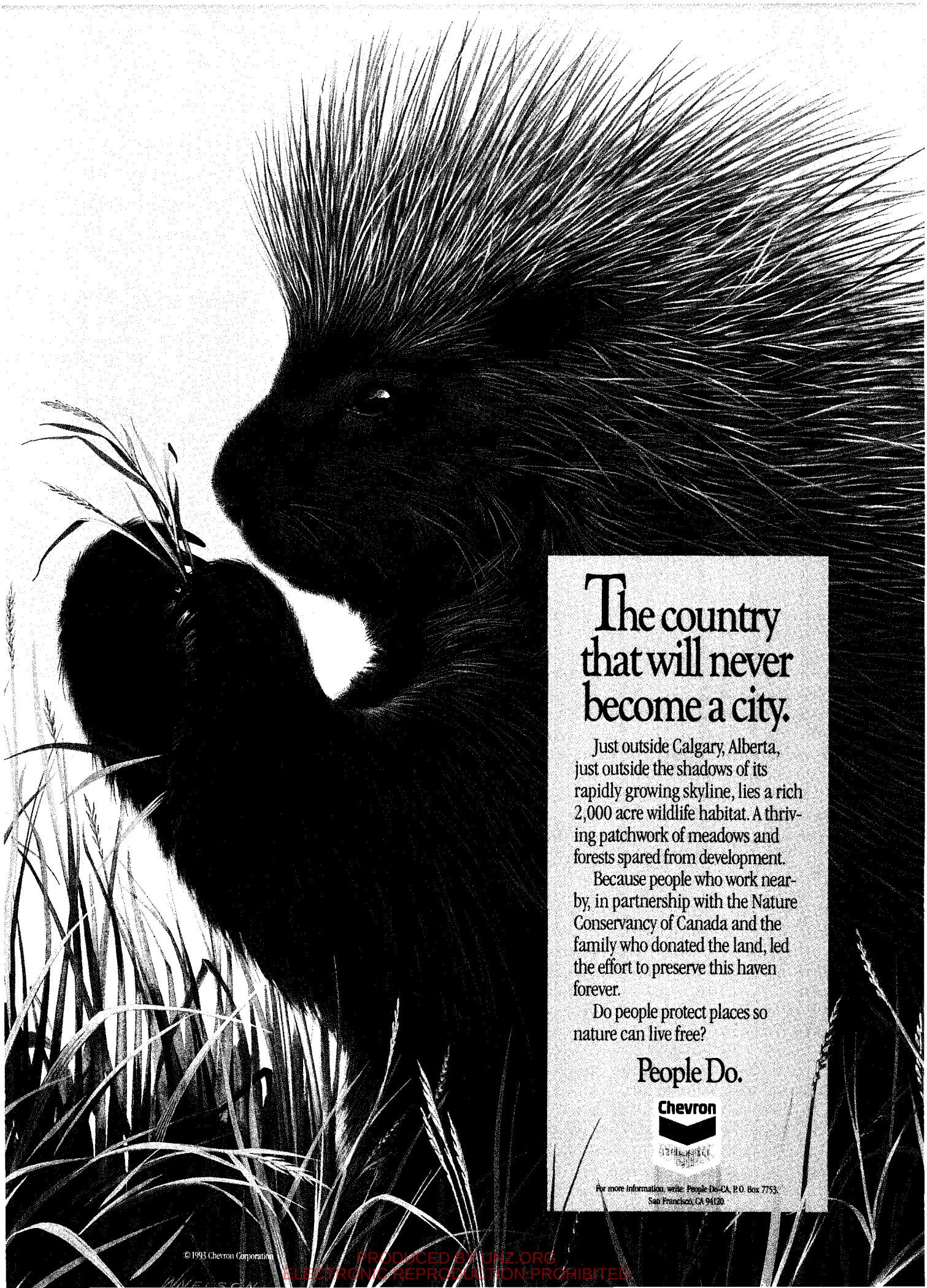

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DEMOCRATS PREFER TO VIEW PEROT'S SUPPORTERS AS REPUBLICANS WHO HAVE SEEN THE LIGHT. LIKE THE WALLACE MOVEMENT IN THE 1960s, PEROT'S MOVEMENT LOOKED LIKE A TEMPORARY REFUGE FOR VOTERS ON THE WAY FROM ONE PARTY TO THE OTHER.

The Republicans

THE TWO PARTIES NOW CONFRONT QUITE DIFferent tasks. With Democrats in control of both houses of Congress, they have the ball, and the Republicans can only play defense. Republicans have limited control over their destiny. Their goal is to build internal unity and present an attractive face to voters in the event the Clinton presidency fails. That may not be easy.

At the Republican National Convention last year Patrick Buchanan spoke of a raging "cultural war." He was referring to the nation, but the phrase better describes his party, which now faces deep divisions over its stated commitment to conservative cultural values—especially on the issue of abortion.

Some Republicans believe that the prominent role of religious fundamentalists in the party and the uncompromising platform plank on abortion cost them the White House in 1992. They have formed an organization, the Republican Majority Coalition (RMC), devoted to pushing the party toward the political center. It has been modeled after the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), which was organized by moderate Democrats in 1985 to bring the Democrats back to the center. (One of the DLC's founders and chairmen was Bill Clinton.) Moderate Republicans intend to resist efforts by the religious right to expand its influence in the party. They also hope to push the party toward a pro-choice position on abortion, or toward no position at all.

On abortion, at least, the RMC has a strong argument: the party's official position is not widely supported. In the nationwide exit poll on November 3, only nine percent of the voters said they thought that abortion should be illegal in all cases; an additional 23 percent said it should be illegal in most cases. That compares with a total of 63 percent who said abortion should be legal in all (34 percent) or most (29 percent) cases.

The abortion issue could also hinder Republican efforts to reach Perot voters, who are far closer to Clinton voters than to Bush voters in their opinions on abortion. Fully 69 percent of Perot's backers believed that abortion should be legal in all or most cases—a percentage just a little lower than that of Clinton voters, but half again as high as the figure for the Bush camp.

We asked Orson Swindle, a conservative Republican who served as Perot's campaign spokesman, how the party could appeal to Perot supporters. His advice was this: "They've got to move back toward the middle of the road, realizing that that's where 70 percent of the American people are. They've got to counter the image that came out of the convention of being exclusionary." The rhetoric of the Republican convention crossed the line between promoting values and stigmatizing those who disagreed. Perot voters, many of whom have a libertarian political orientation, will be difficult to attract with that kind of message.

Nevertheless, the Republican Majority Coalition misses an important point. Republicans cannot afford to give up culturally conservative voters. Three in ten Bush voters were white born-again Christians; 50 percent said abortion should in most or all cases be illegal; 55 percent attend church at least once a week (compared with a third of Clinton and Perot voters). Many of these people are closer to the Democratic Party on issues like health care and the economy. When they voted for Bush on November 3, they were voting their values.

Over the past twelve years religion has become increasingly important in differentiating support for the two major parties. Religious voters of all persuasions have been gravitating to the Republicans, while nonreligious voters have tended to vote Democratic. If religious voters see no significant difference between the parties on the values front, many will do what they did in the past—either vote their pocketbooks or stay home.

The Bush campaign pollster Fred Steeper told us that he fears his party will be "bluffed off the religious vote by the liberal press" and will therefore lose this critical bloc. In his view, "The traditional-values appeal the Republicans picked up with Reagan is very important to the party politically, because we picked up a new segment. It gets us a lower-end vote that we wouldn't get on just economic issues." Conservatives point out, correctly, that the Republican position on social issues, including abortion, was the same in 1980, 1984, and 1988, years when Reagan and Bush won, as it was in 1992.

Without cultural issues the party loses the principal source of its populist appeal. It is difficult to imagine how the party can win many battles with neither economic nor cultural populism in its arsenal. It will go back to being what it was before Nixon—the minority party representing the economic elite.

In some ways the Republicans' problem with religious voters is similar to the problem the Democrats used to

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have with the black vote. Starting in the 1960s many conservative whites were turned off by the impression that blacks held too much power in the Democratic Party. But the Democrats could hardly afford to purge blacks from their coalition, as some moderate Republicans now seem to want to do with fundamentalists. A purge would polarize the party and make a weak coalition weaker. "The politics of exclusion is the politics of defeat," Haley Barbour told Republican governors last November. "Takeovers of the party and purges from the party are equally unacceptable."

The leaders of the DLC, including Clinton, tried to create a broader, more inclusive definition of their party that would appeal beyond its black and liberal base. Look at how Clinton won: He built a strong biracial coalition, both in the primaries and in the general election. He took steps to reassure white voters by emphasizing "personal responsibility" and advocating welfare reform. Many blacks very likely agreed with Clinton on those issues. His public skirmish with Jesse Jackson in the Sister Souljah affair probably helped him with moderate and conservative whites, and there is no evidence that it did him any harm among blacks. Ironically, the real glue for Clinton's winning coalition was the issue that Jackson has always emphasized—"economic common ground." Clinton won by focusing attention on issues like jobs, health care, and education, which white and black Democrats largely agree on.

RMC moderates have to do what the DLC did—formulate a broader, more inclusive definition of their party which has appeal beyond its conservative and religious base. The trick for Republicans is to find enough common ground to hold the religious conservatives without alienating middle-of-the-road independents and moderates. It will be difficult but probably not impossible. Reagan did it by building a diverse coalition united by resentment of the federal government. That was something economic conservatives, religious conservatives, racial-backlash voters, and middle-class taxpayers had in common.

Remember that many analysts said the Democrats could never overcome their "race problem." But they did. On the other hand, it took them a quarter of a century to do it.

The Democrats

BILL CLINTON, MORE THAN MOST PRESIDENTS, was elected to do one thing. His job is to fix the economy. To build a new Democratic majority, Clinton will have to persuade Americans not just that the economy is getting better but also that the nation is on a sound economic footing for the long term. That's critical for securing a middle-class base for the party.

What the middle class wants out of government isn't programs; it's prosperity. They don't want government to solve all their problems. They want it to protect their jobs and keep their incomes secure from the threat of tax increases, inflation, and out-of-control health-care costs. If their income is secure, middle-class voters believe, they can solve their problems for themselves.

Back in the 1970s the Democrats briefly flirted with the idea of no-growth economics—Jimmy Carter's era of limits, Jerry Brown's "Small is beautiful." Clinton must prove that the Democrats have learned their lesson—namely, that economic growth is necessary for social progress, even if it is not sufficient. Democrats know that the economic growth of the 1980s made some problems worse (such as economic inequality and the instability of financial institutions) and had no effect on other problems (such as the decay of the nation's cities and the health-care crisis). But Democrats now understand that before they can make progress toward solving problems like inequality and urban decay, they have to make sure the middle class feels economically secure.

In developing his economic program Clinton had to navigate among conflicting pressures. The desire to capture the Perot constituency pulled him toward the center: 53 percent of Perot voters were moderates; only 20 percent called themselves liberals; two thirds said they preferred less government and lower taxes. Clinton's toughest test with Perot voters will almost certainly be the deficit. For them, it is a test both of willingness to confront politics as usual and of seriousness about tackling the economy. A failure to demonstrate real commitment to deficit reduction would make it difficult for Clinton to gain Perot supporters' trust.

But Clinton has to be careful to listen to the music of the Perot movement (anti-establishment) and not just read the lyrics (deficit reduction). The Clinton program includes some gestures toward political reform, such as campaign-finance reform and the elimination of the business tax deduction for lobbyists. An awful lot of the Clinton Administration, however, looks like the Washington and Wall Street establishments. To many Perot supporters, we've still got government by insiders.

At the same time, the Democratic Party base will pull Clinton toward the left. Although the Democratic majority in Congress is not any larger than it was before the election, it has a more liberal cast. There are five new women and minority senators, all Democrats, and forty-three new women and minority representatives, thirty-seven of them Democrats. Many liberal interest groups have been starved for public funds for twelve years. They're going to pressure Congress and the Administration for more spending. As noted earlier, the contours of Clinton's vote were decidedly liberal: blacks, Jews, gays, Hispanics, liberals, poor people, and city dwellers. Those voters expect, and deserve, some kind of payoff for their loyalty.

Between the two camps is Clinton himself. The commentator Ben Wattenberg has observed that there seem to be two sides to Bill Clinton. One is the liberal, anti-war, Hillary side. The other is the moderate, southern-governor, DLC side. He was careful to keep the two

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MANY OF THE SKILLS THAT HAVE GOTTEN BILL CLINTON WHERE HE IS TODAY—AMONG THEM HIS INSTINCT FOR COMPROMISE—ARE PRECISELY WHAT PEROT VOTERS HATE ABOUT POLITICIANS. AND IN 1996 CLINTON WON'T BE ABLE TO RUN AS AN OUTSIDER.

sides balanced when he made his top-level appointments last December. The liberals got labor, environment, and health and human services. The moderates got treasury, budget, defense, and intelligence.

But Clinton would be the first to say that there's really only one Bill Clinton. He believes that his politics represents an important new synthesis, that he is truly "a new kind of Democrat." He has denounced the "brain-dead policies" of both political parties. He has rejected liberalism and conservatism as "false choices." He has said that his policies represent a "third way," different from discredited Republican trickle-down economics and discredited Democratic tax-and-spend economics.

In that spirit, Clinton maintains that he can reduce the deficit while elevating the living standards of the poor and the middle class, by increasing spending on the right things—investment, as opposed to consumption. He calls it "invest and grow" economics. As political rhetoric it is a proven success. The question now is whether it will work as a governing philosophy.

The President's Challenge

CLINTON BEGINS HIS PRESIDENCY WITH TWO IMportant advantages over the Republicans in pursuing the Perot vote. First, Perot voters have substantially more confidence in the Democrats than in the Republicans to handle their two greatest concerns: the economy and the deficit. They have their doubts about Clinton, to be sure; that's why they didn't vote for him. But they still have an open mind about the new President, as they no longer did about Bush. And they hope he succeeds.

Perot supporters' initial response to Clinton's economic program, announced in the President's speech to Congress on February 17, was, like that of other Americans, quite positive. That was not surprising, because there was a lot of Ross Perot in Clinton's speech—notably the emphasis on political reform and deficit reduction. The day after the speech a CNN-*Time* magazine poll asked people whether they thought Clinton was "now much closer to Ross Perot's economic positions than he was during last year's campaign." By two to one, Perot supporters said yes.

Second, although Perot supporters are on the whole a little more conservative than Clinton, pragmatism is their real philosophy. If the economy grows, there are no ideological barriers to their entering the Democratic fold. The Republican quandary is how to appeal to a group of pragmatists when you have no political power. Clinton may or may not deliver the goods, but at least he has a truck.

Not all is rosy for the Democrats, though. A big part of what attracted voters to Perot was that he was not a conventional politician. Bill Clinton, however, has been a politician all his life. Many of the skills that have gotten him where he is today—among them his instinct for compromise—are precisely what Perot voters hate about politicians. And in 1996 he won't be able to run as a Washington outsider.

Then there's Ross Perot. For much of 1992 he directed his fire at George Bush and the Administration. His critique of Bush's economic management was politically devastating, coming as it did from a non-Democrat whose only motive appeared to be concern for the country. But now it is the Clinton Administration that Perot will be trying to hold accountable. And he lost no time in signaling the critical stance he will take, blasting Clinton even before the new President was sworn in.

Clinton is clearly concerned about Perot's influence. The President went to the trouble to telephone Perot the day he delivered his economic program to Congress and brief him on what was in it. Perot's response to the plan was guarded. "I don't really know what to say about the new Clinton economic plan," Perot told a rally in Florida. "The President only laid out the outlines." Perot said in a television interview the night of the speech, "The devil is in the details."

Like many of the President's critics, Perot expressed concern about the ratio of spending cuts to tax increases. In a telephone interview with *The New York Times* the morning after Clinton's speech, Perot asked, "Are the taxes really going to be used on the deficit, or on more spending? Is spending really going to be cut, or are you going to end up with a dollar eighty-three in new spending for every dollar raised, the way we have so many times in the past?"

Clinton's Republican critics argue that almost all the deficit reduction in the President's plan comes from defense cuts and tax increases, and that the domestic-spending cuts are more than counterbalanced by increased spending on what the Administration calls "investment." If that is the case, then Clinton's program seeks to achieve something Democrats have been dreaming of for twelve years: undoing the Reagan Revolution.

Ronald Reagan cut taxes and increased defense spend-

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ing. For all his tough talk, however, Reagan never succeeded in making a deal with Congress to cut domestic spending—so the deficit went up. A lot of Republicans thought the deficit set a perfect trap for the Democrats. Sooner or later the Democrats were bound to get elected. With a huge budget deficit, they wouldn't have any money to spend. They would either have to raise taxes and destroy themselves politically or accept the reality of limited government.

But Clinton may have outsmarted the Republicans. His program eludes the deficit trap. Here's the secret: the Democrats adopt the cause of deficit reduction. That gives them a justification for doing what they have wanted to do since 1981—increase taxes and cut defense. Walter Mondale got blasted for saying he would raise taxes to reduce the deficit in 1984. Now Clinton is being applauded for it. Why the difference? Because two things happened between 1984 and 1993. The economy went sour under George Bush, making a lot of people believe that it needed fixing. And Ross Perot identified the deficit as what needed to be fixed.

What Clinton wants to do is a reverse Reagan—increase taxes and cut defense spending. For all his tough talk about domestic cuts, Clinton will probably do no better than Reagan did. Remember, the Democrats have an ambitious new investment agenda. But at least some of the revenues from the tax hikes and the defense cuts will go toward deficit reduction. A smaller deficit lets Democrats be Democrats. They can spend money again, as long as they are careful to call it investment. That way Bill Clinton can continue to depict himself as a new kind of Democrat.

First, however, Clinton has to sell his program. He has to do that in the new political context established by the 1992 campaign. The message of 1992 was, instant democracy works. Perot bypassed all the established institutions and procedures when he ran for President. He took his campaign directly to the people and did surprisingly well.

Instant democracy also worked for Clinton. When his campaign got into trouble during the primaries over marital fidelity and the draft, Clinton, too, went directly to the people. He bet that the voters would be more interested in his economic proposals than in his personal life—and he won that bet. The voters set the agenda for the 1992 campaign.

The problem is, the voters want to continue setting the agenda now that Clinton is President. No sooner did he take office than the voters insisted on having their say about Zoë Baird's qualifications for attorney general and about Clinton's plan to lift the ban on homosexuals in the military. In an era of instant democracy it may be more difficult than ever to build a majority coalition and hold it together for any length of time.

Ultimately, Clinton will be judged by his ability to turn the economy around. Once he does that, he can move in any direction he wants. Franklin Roosevelt sold the New Deal, a vast expansion of federal spending and power, because the economy improved. Reagan sold Reaganomics, a retrenchment of federal spending and power, because the economy improved. Jimmy Carter and George Bush had major foreign-policy achievements, but they couldn't sell the voters anything because they allowed the economy to deteriorate; they were defeated for re-election, and their parties paid a heavy price.

Whether Clinton succeeds or fails, one thing is clear: Americans want to move beyond the Reagan-Bush era. At the end of February, shortly after President Clinton announced his economic plan, the CNN–*USA Today*–Gallup Poll asked people how they would vote if the 1992 presidential election were "held again today." Among 1992 voters Clinton's support went from 43 percent in the election to 47 percent four months later. That's up a bit, but still less than a majority. Perot's support also held up surprisingly well—19 percent at the polls, 22 percent in 1993. The big loser, once again, was Bush, whose standing dropped from 38 to 31 percent. The February poll had even worse news for the Republicans. By 61 to 29 percent, Americans said that Ronald Reagan's economic policies were a failure. The public may not be sure about where Clinton is going. But they don't want to go back to where they were.

If Clinton fails to put the nation back on track toward broad, middle-class prosperity, the prospects for a new Democratic majority will evaporate. But that won't necessarily mean a return to the status quo ante. Even if the Republicans can bind up the wounds of their cultural civil war, they have lost substantial credibility on the economic front. With both parties discredited, national politics could be more wide open than it has been at any other time in this century.

That's the view of Clinton's pollster Stanley Greenberg: "If Clinton succeeds, he will create a new Democratic majority with a new social base, which incorporates a good part of the Perot bloc. If he doesn't succeed, I don't believe it will go back to the Republican coalition we knew, which is in disrepute. I think you'd end up with a volatile three-party politics, maybe a Latin American–type politics."

Greenberg's forecast is a bit apocalyptic. If the Democrats fail to govern effectively, however, after raising so many hopes, they could very well leave American politics in disarray. The possibility of a successful independent presidential candidacy, by Perot or someone else, cannot be ruled out. Remember that Perot was winning in the polls last spring. The distrust of politics and politicians which Perot addressed remains very much alive. So does United We Stand America.

In order to get the Perot vote, Clinton is going to have to prove that a professional politician can actually solve the nation's problems. What's at stake here is not just the future of the Democratic and Republican parties. It's also the viability of the American political process. □

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After a century of evolution, shopping malls are now urban centers, with post offices, hotels, counseling centers, and even amusement parks—all in a weather-protected, safe, clean place. Now signs of real life are starting to appear

THE NEW DOWNTOWNS

BY WITOLD RYBCZYNSKI

EVERY TWO OR THREE WEEKS I GO TO THE MALL. I drive, of course, and leave my car in the large lot. I don't dislike parking lots except at night, when they feel spooky, although not as spooky as underground parking garages: thanks to the movies, an underground garage always makes me think of echoing footsteps, screaming tires, gunshots. I read the bumper stickers and look at what people display on the rear-window shelf. There are rarely any interesting-looking cars: the mall I go to is patronized by small-town folk and farmers who tend to drive pickup trucks and Japanese compacts.

Inside the mall the atmosphere is enlivened by families eating lunch in the food court, excited teenagers swarming at the video arcade, young parents trailing children on the way to the movie theater. I suppose that my academic colleagues would find this unsophisticated version of urbanity depressing (although you can get a reasonable espresso here), and would probably refer darkly to "hyperconsumerism" and "artificial reality." But I am more encouraged than depressed. People are walking, they are rubbing shoulders, they are in a shared space.

Among urban sophisticates references to malls are invariably accompanied by a smirk or a sigh, but for most Americans shopping malls are an accepted part of everyday life, just like freeway commuting, fast food, garage sales, and backyard barbecues. Like these institutions, malls are resolutely middlebrow. Although there are plenty of upscale malls that cater to the rich, the classic mall is not an effete oasis of luxury—nor is it the utilitarian strip of the poor neighborhood. It's the so-called regional mall, generally defined as having more than 400,000 square feet of retail space and at least one department store—the equivalent of a fair-sized downtown shopping area. According to the National Research Bureau, at the end of last year the country contained 38,966 operating shopping centers, of which 1,835 were large regional malls.

Exemplary Models

CRITICS OF SHOPPING MALLS TALK ABOUT THE "malling of America" as if it were a sudden phenomenon, but it has taken almost a hundred years for the mall to become a feature of both the urban and the suburban landscape. Harvey Rabinowitz, who teaches in the school of architecture and urban planning of the University of Wisconsin, in Milwaukee, cites the shopping mall in explaining how changes often occur in building. According to Rabinowitz, in free-market societies new ideas about how to organize the urban environment are frequently introduced not by city planners or architects but by individual businessmen in the private sector. If these ideas are popular with the public, they become what he calls exemplary models, and go on to be widely imitated. In the past such urban models have included the English housing terrace, popularized in the eighteenth century by the Bath architect-developer John Wood the Elder, and quickly copied by speculative builders across Georgian Britain. Other examples: the department store, originated by Parisian entrepreneurs in the 1860s and popularized throughout Europe and America after millions of foreigners visited Paris for the great exhibitions of the late 1800s; and the high-rise business district. This last model began to appear in the 1880s in Chicago, the product of technological invention (steel-frame construction, the elevator), land speculation, and the desire for architectural splendor. So powerful was the image of the downtown skyline that it was quickly reproduced across the continent and finally around the world.

Exemplary models originate in response to economic and social forces in the marketplace, but their success is also due to refinement and modification during their later evolution. The history of the shopping mall is replete with experimentation and a host of small inventions. The shopping cart, for example, introduced in the 1930s, greatly facilitated the operation of supermarkets, which were a prominent feature of early shopping centers. The food court is the convivial focus of many contemporary malls; its successful introduction in the early 1970s by The Rouse Company and The Pyramid Companies was a milestone of shopping-center design.

The shopping center emerged in the early 1900s in the suburbs that encircled American cities. Suburbs of the time tended to be chiefly residential and to depend on the traditional downtown for shopping. The first suburban commercial centers had three identifiable features: they consisted of a number of stores built and leased by a single developer, they were usually situated at an important intersection, and they provided plenty of free, off-street parking. Roland Park Shopping Center, which opened at

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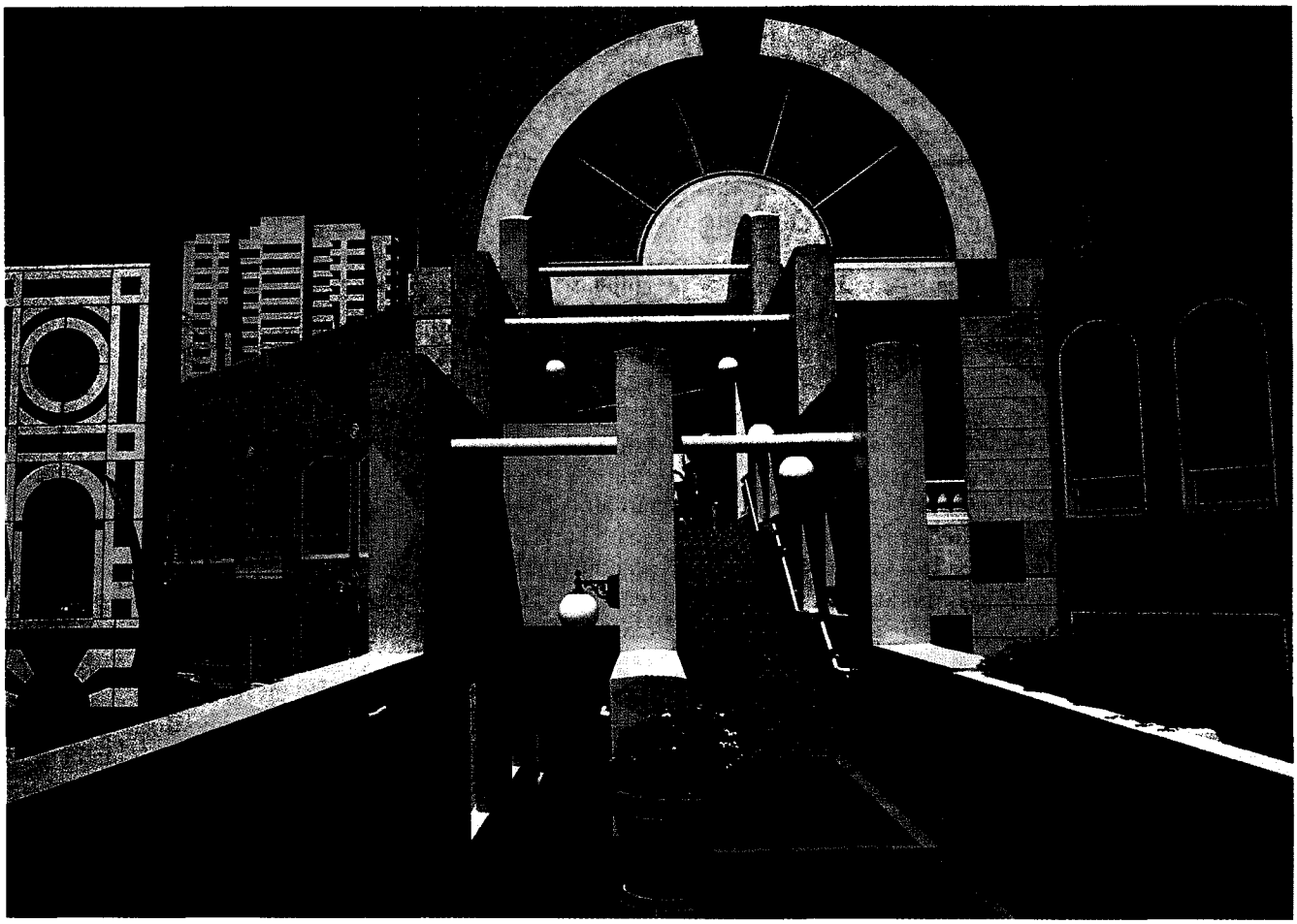
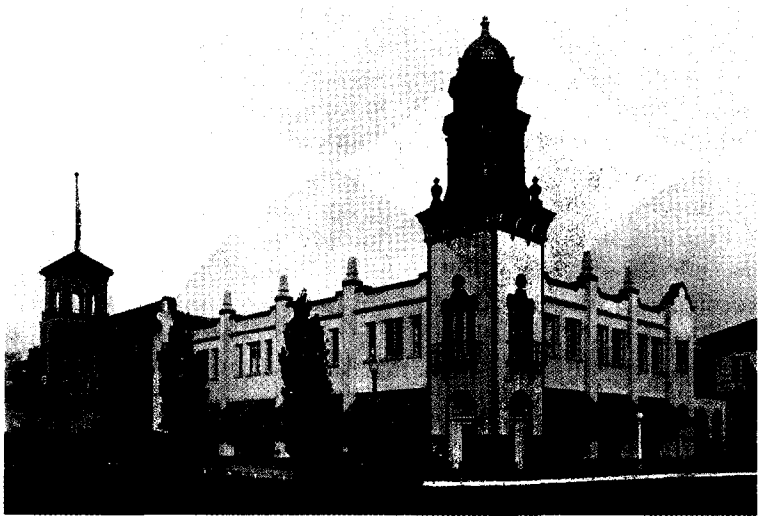


the turn of the century, about five miles north of downtown Baltimore, is listed by the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the first shopping center; it had only six establishments. It was followed by Market Square in Lake Forest, near Chicago (1916), and Country Club Plaza, which opened in 1925 in Kansas City, and became well known thanks to its proselytizing owner, Jesse Clyde Nichols. These "shopping villages" consciously recalled small-town shopping districts, both in their architecture, which was carefully traditional, and in their layout, which integrated them into the surrounding neighborhood—the stores faced the street and the parking lots were usually in the rear.

Some Depression-era shopping villages, such as Highland Park, in suburban Dallas (1931), and the Farmers Market chain, in California, did include stores oriented to a private pedestrian walkway, which presaged the inward-looking shopping centers of the future. Highland Park combined a variety of commercial tenants, not only retail stores but also a pharmacy, a bank, a beauty salon, a barbershop, a theater, and offices. Farmers Markets were the 1930s equivalents of today's discount warehouses, and to keep prices low they were built on cheap land at the edges of cities; since most people drove to go shopping, the peripheral location was not an inconvenience. This did not escape the attention of developers, who understood that with almost universal car ownership the pool of potential customers for any single shopping center—those who lived within a five-minute drive, say, rather than within a five-minute walk—had grown very large.

SAN DIEGO'S HORTON PLAZA (ABOVE) RECALLS ELEMENTS OF KANSAS CITY'S MOORISH COUNTRY CLUB PLAZA (BELOW)

J. C. NICHOLS COMPANY



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The spread of shopping centers was slowed by the Depression and the Second World War. According to Kenneth T. Jackson, a Columbia University professor and the author of *Crabgrass Frontier*, a history of American suburbanization, in 1946 there were still only eight shopping centers in the entire United States. What was needed was an exemplary model, and it arrived in the form of the regional shopping center. It is generally agreed that the first such shopping center was Northgate, which opened on the outskirts of Seattle in 1950. The architect, John Graham Jr., devised a long open-air pedestrian way that was a sort of carless street, lined with a department store and a number of smaller stores. The idea was that the department store, which is called an anchor, would attract people, who would then walk—and shop—along the way. In addition to stores, Northgate included several freestanding structures: a gas station, a drive-in bank, and a movie theater. Like all future suburban shopping centers, it was built next to a highway. The inward-oriented buildings were surrounded by a 4,000-car parking lot that took up about three quarters of the fifty-acre site.

The convenience of "one-stop shopping" appealed to many people, and during the 1950s the construction of shopping centers, in tandem with the expansion of suburbs, began in earnest; the total went from about a hundred centers nationwide in 1950 to about 3,700 a decade later. Not only were there more centers but also they were bigger. One of the largest was Northland, in Detroit, which opened in 1954 and provided more than a million square feet of rentable space and parking for 7,400 cars. The 250-acre area around the center was planned to accommodate a host of nonretail buildings, including offices, research laboratories, apartments, a hospital, and a hotel. This made Northland probably the first example of what the *Washington Post* reporter Joel Garreau would later call an "edge city," in his book of the same title.

A New Way to Shop

THE RAPID PROLIFERATION OF SHOPPING CENTERS was not just a function of suburban growth. It also signified a change in the shopping habits of Americans. These new shopping places were competing directly with the traditional downtown shopping district, and in most cases they were winning. According to Bernard Frieden and Lynne Sagalyn, professors of urban studies and the authors of *Downtown, Inc.: How America Rebuilds Cities* (1989), from 1948 to 1954, in the midst of a nationwide economic boom, the downtown share of retailing fell by a fourth in thirteen of the largest metropolitan areas, and the profit margins of downtown department stores sank lower than they had been even in the Depression.

In 1960 Buckminster Fuller proposed the construction of a huge dome that would cover a fifty-block area in midtown Manhattan. Fuller pointed out that such a dome would prevent snow and rain from falling on the protected area, and would control the quality of the air. Most people dismissed the outlandish idea—like many of Fuller's inventions, it was part in earnest, part publicity stunt. Perhaps they shouldn't have. Indeed, Fuller's vision of urban life taking place in an artificially controlled environment had been realized several years before.

In 1956 a shopping center that would become the exemplary model for the next three decades opened in Edina, a suburb of Minneapolis. Southdale (the early centers all seem to have been named after compass points) was not particularly large, just over half a million square feet of retail space, and it followed the usual pattern of buildings surrounded by parking lots. But it included a striking innovation: the public walking areas were not outdoors but indoors, air-conditioned in the summer and heated in the winter. The architect, Victor Gruen, a transplanted Viennese and a prolific designer of shopping centers (he had been the architect of Northland), cited the glass-roofed nineteenth-century gallerias of Milan and Naples as his inspiration, even if the bland, modernistic interior of Southdale did not much resemble its Italian antecedents. Indoor shopping streets are attractive anywhere the climate is marked by hot, humid summers or harsh winters or both, and enclosed shopping malls began to appear in the cold Midwest and Northeast, in the South and Southwest, in hot southern California, and in the wet Northwest—that is, everywhere.

From 1960 to 1970 more than 8,000 new shopping centers opened in the United States—twice as many as in the previous decade. The great majority of the regional centers followed the example of Southdale and provided enclosed walking areas. To optimize this extra investment, the new centers were built on two or even three levels (this idea, too, had been introduced at Southdale), which meant that walking distances were reduced and shopping centers could house even more stores. In 1970 the Galleria in suburban Houston, which did recall its Italian namesakes, opened with more than 1.5 million square feet of retail and commercial space; the following year Woodfield, outside Chicago, provided two million square feet of shopping under one roof. During the 1980s malls got even larger: the Del Amo Fashion Center, in Torrance, California, enclosed three million square feet, and the mother of all malls—the Ghermezian brothers' West Edmonton Mall, in Alberta—covers 5.2 million square feet. In all, from 1970 to 1990 about 25,000 new shopping centers were built in the United States: every seven hours during that period a new shopping mall opened its doors to the public.

And the mall was not only a suburban phenomenon. It became a key ingredient of the urban revitalization that was taking place throughout the seventies and eighties. Charleston; Stamford, Connecticut; White Plains, New York; Salt Lake City; Minneapolis; Philadelphia; and

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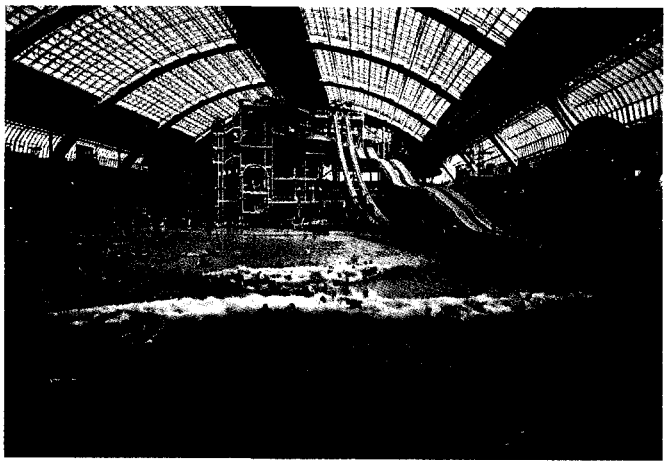
Chicago were all sites of large downtown malls. In Boston, Baltimore, and New York, The Rouse Company, a major shopping-center developer, built so-called festival marketplaces, which were really shopping malls in waterfront settings; they were often shoehorned into rehabilitated dockside buildings.

The Galleria, in Houston, whose centerpiece was a year-round ice-skating rink, added yet another ingredient to the exemplary model. The developer, Gerald Hines, incorporated a variety of nonretail uses not in separate buildings, as had been done before, but within the mall. The lobbies of the hotel and office buildings, for example, could be entered directly from the enclosed space. This was not as dramatic as roofing over public spaces, but its effect on the environment was just as great. Both developers and the public began to think of malls not merely as shopping conveniences but as urban places in which someone could enjoy spending several hours. Although retail functions continued to dominate, mall developers added recreation facilities like health and athletic clubs and were also able to attract banks, brokerage houses, and medical centers. It has become increasingly common for malls to fulfill civic functions, with public libraries (Saint John, New Brunswick, and Tucson, Arizona), the USO (Hampton, Virginia), a city-hall branch office (Everett, Washington), and federal and state agencies. The Sports Museum of New England, in East Cambridge, Massachusetts, is housed in a mall, and so is a children's museum in Ogden, Utah. The Board of Education of Ottawa has been operating a storefront classroom in a shopping mall since November of 1987, and a local high school recently opened a counseling center in the West Edmonton Mall. Just as noncommercial spaces are showing up in shopping malls, malls are popping up in unexpected places: York University, in suburban Toronto, recently added a shopping mall to its campus, and Pittsburgh's new airport includes a mall with more than a hundred stores, three food courts, and, appropriately enough, a chiropractor.

H. ARMSTRONG ROBERTS



EASTCOTT/MOMATIUK/W. CAMP

ITALIAN GALLERIAS (AS IN NAPLES, ABOVE) INSPIRED MANY OF TODAY'S MALLS (SUCH AS WEST EDMONTON, BELOW)

Private Property or Public Forum?

THE APPEARANCE of noncommercial tenants in shopping malls has made them even more like traditional downtowns, but it has also raised the issue of public access. Are malls private property, as many mall owners have always maintained, or have they become, as the American Civil Liberties Union has argued, public places that should be obliged to observe the principles of free speech—to allow unlimited access to community groups, including petitioners and political demonstrators? Understandably, mall owners have not been keen on the idea of having abortion groups arguing their cases in the food court, or of hosting a violent altercation between the Ku Klux Klan and its opponents (this actually happened, in a Connecticut mall in the mid-1980s). Such altercations are just the sort of thing that mall shoppers want to get away from. In a 1990 Gallup poll 73 percent of respondents said that shopping centers shouldn't have to allow political gatherings. It is disingenuous, however, for developers to argue that they are merely merchants. They have become city builders, and as such should be prepared to take the bad—or at least the awkward—with the good.

In 1968 the U.S. Supreme

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Court ruled that shopping malls could not interfere with individuals' exercise of their First Amendment rights. But in a 1972 ruling (*Lloyd Corp.* v. *Tanner et al.*) the court reversed itself and held that the First Amendment did not require shopping centers to allow the distribution of war-related leaflets. So matters stood until 1980, when a unanimous ruling on a public-access case concerning a mall in California held that the state constitution granted greater free-speech rights than the U.S. Constitution, which effectively made public access a state issue. So far other states have tended to support the notion that malls are private property; ten state supreme courts have ruled against public access. Only five states have supported it, and then only in fairly limited forms—to groups soliciting signatures for a state initiative, for example, or to candidates seeking signatures to qualify for a place on the ballot.

But the example of California malls may in the long run be influential. If large regional malls want to be a part of the community and attract a broad cross-section of the population, it is in their interest to allow access to local nonprofit groups. Although not legally required to do so, a small number of mall owners are beginning to do exactly that. The Rouse Company provides a booth for community activities in its mall in Columbia, Maryland, and encourages its mall managers elsewhere to make similar accommodations; so does The Edward J. DeBartolo Corporation, of Youngstown, Ohio, the nation's largest shopping-center developer and manager.

Another reason that mall owners may eventually support the idea of public access is that since the California ruling the state's access requirements have proved to be neither troublesome nor expensive, despite the fears of some developers. In 1991 the giant Hahn Company, which owns and operates thirty malls in California, signed an agreement with the ACLU which permits leafleting and canvassing in designated locations in most of its malls. Robert L. Sorensen, the vice-president of Hahn, told *Shopping Centers Today*, an industry monthly, "We haven't seen expenses rise because of it, and I don't think it's costing us shoppers."

A Place to Play

WORK AND PLAY, SHOPPING AND RECREATION, community promotion and public protest—the mall now houses more and more of the activities of the traditional downtown, including that newest of urban industries, tourism. With its skating rink and glass-roofed promenade, Houston's Galleria quickly became a tourist attraction. The builders of the West Edmonton Mall provided not only a skating rink but also an amusement park, an aviary, a dolphin pool, an artificial lagoon with a submarine ride, a floating replica of the *Santa Maria*, and the world's largest indoor water park, complete with an artificial beach and rolling surf—all calculated to draw vacationers in addition to shoppers.

"We expect that a third of our visitors will be tourists coming from more than a hundred and fifty miles away," says Michael Dorsey, a spokesman for the Mall of America, the recently opened 4.2-million-square-foot mall in Bloomington, Minnesota, outside Minneapolis. The Mall of America expects to attract an average of about 100,000 people a day when it is fully operational; during the first three months after its opening, last August, nearly a million people a week visited the mall. Indeed, according to the owners, the Mall of America is expected to draw more visitors than Walt Disney World or the Grand Canyon.

The Mall of America is an extremely large shopping mall—four department stores, about 360 specialty stores to date, more than forty restaurants and food outlets—but the three-level retail area is not particularly remarkable, only bigger than most. What is unusual is the fact that the stores are grouped around a huge (seven-acre) glass-roofed courtyard containing an amusement park with twenty-three rides, two theaters, and dozens of smaller attractions. Although the courtyard is usually described as a theme park (it's called Camp Snoopy), anyone looking for the technological theatricality and sophisticated gimmickry of a Walt Disney World will be disappointed. The attendants are dressed like camp counselors (at first I mistook them for fundraising Boy Scouts), but otherwise there is little attempt at simulation; the rides are tame and the atmosphere is unpretentious, almost homely. At night the sparkling lights, hurdy-gurdy music of the merry-go-round, excited children, and screams of the riders on the roller coaster that races overhead recall the gaiety of a carnival midway at a county fair.

The layout of the Mall of America is reminiscent of what was probably the world's first building to combine shopping and recreation—the eighteenth-century incarnation of the Palais Royal, in Paris. The developer of that project was the Duc de Chartres, whose family home in Paris, beside the Louvre, had an extremely large garden. The duke, chronically short of funds, engaged the architect Victor Louis to design a pleasure garden *à l'anglaise* that also included commercial spaces and apartments for rent. The Palais Royal opened in 1784 to immediate accolades, and it dominated Parisian social life for fifty years. Like many developers since, the duke did not reap the profits of his brilliant idea. Financially ruined by the heavy investment, he was forced to sell off most of the project.

The Palais Royal (which still exists, although today it is a quiet place) consisted of a five-story arcaded building on three sides of a large landscaped courtyard about 100 yards by 300 yards; the fourth side, which was never completed, was closed by wooden stalls. At the ground level were glass-fronted shops along the two-story arcade, but

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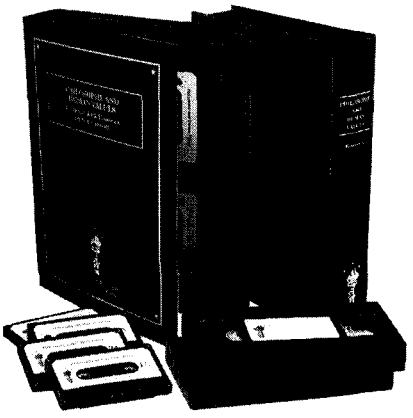

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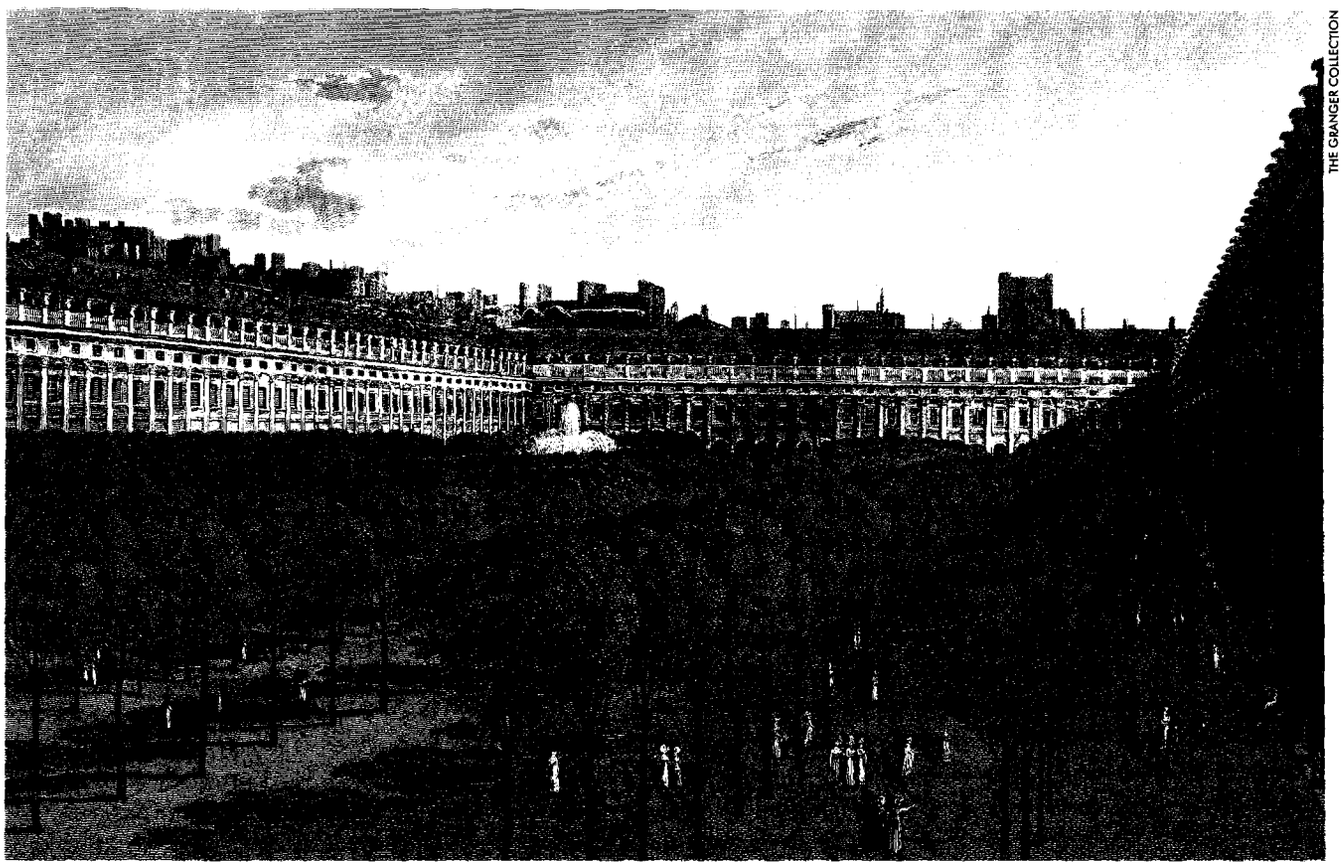

THE GRANGER COLLECTION

ARISTOCRATS AND BOURGEOISIE RUBBED SHOULDERS IN THE COURTYARD AND SHOPS OF THE PALAIS ROYAL, IN PARIS

there were also a variety of other establishments: cafés, eating places, social clubs, gambling rooms, music rooms, auction rooms, a puppet show, a silhouette show, a waxworks, several small hotels, a Turkish bath, and a theater (which later became the home of the Comédie Française). The upper floors contained apartments and rooms, many rented by the high-priced prostitutes for which the Palais became famous. The central courtyard was not merely a pleasure garden; it also contained a circular roofed amphitheater—the Cirque Royal—for public performances, concerts, and balls.

Most of the establishments of the Palais were luxurious and could be afforded only by the rich—or by army officers on a spree—but the arcades and the garden were open to all except the poorest classes (who were invited in on only three special days of the year), and they were places where aristocrat and bourgeois mixed. The Palais Royal merged shopping with entertainment and pleasure with leisure. "Should an American savage come to the Palais Royal," the Russian novelist Nikolai Karamzin wrote, "in half an hour he would be most beautifully attired and would have a richly furnished house, a carriage, many servants, twenty courses on the table, and, if he wished, a blooming Laïs who each moment would die for love of him."

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Clearly, the Mall of America has a ways to go. In its own middle-American way, though, it too aspires to be a "place for fun in your life," as its theme song puts it. This ambition is evident in the nightclub area, which shares the fourth level of the mall with a fourteen-screen cineplex that includes a 4,000-seat theater. Although the stores in the mall close at 10:00 P.M., the nightclubs, which include a sports bar, a comedy club, and a country-and-western supper club, stay open until 1:00 A.M. Combine neon, nighttime, loud music, alcohol, and cruising singles, and the resulting atmosphere (it reminded me of a sort of midwestern Times Square—there was a whiff, but only a whiff, of sin) is not what one usually associates with shopping malls.

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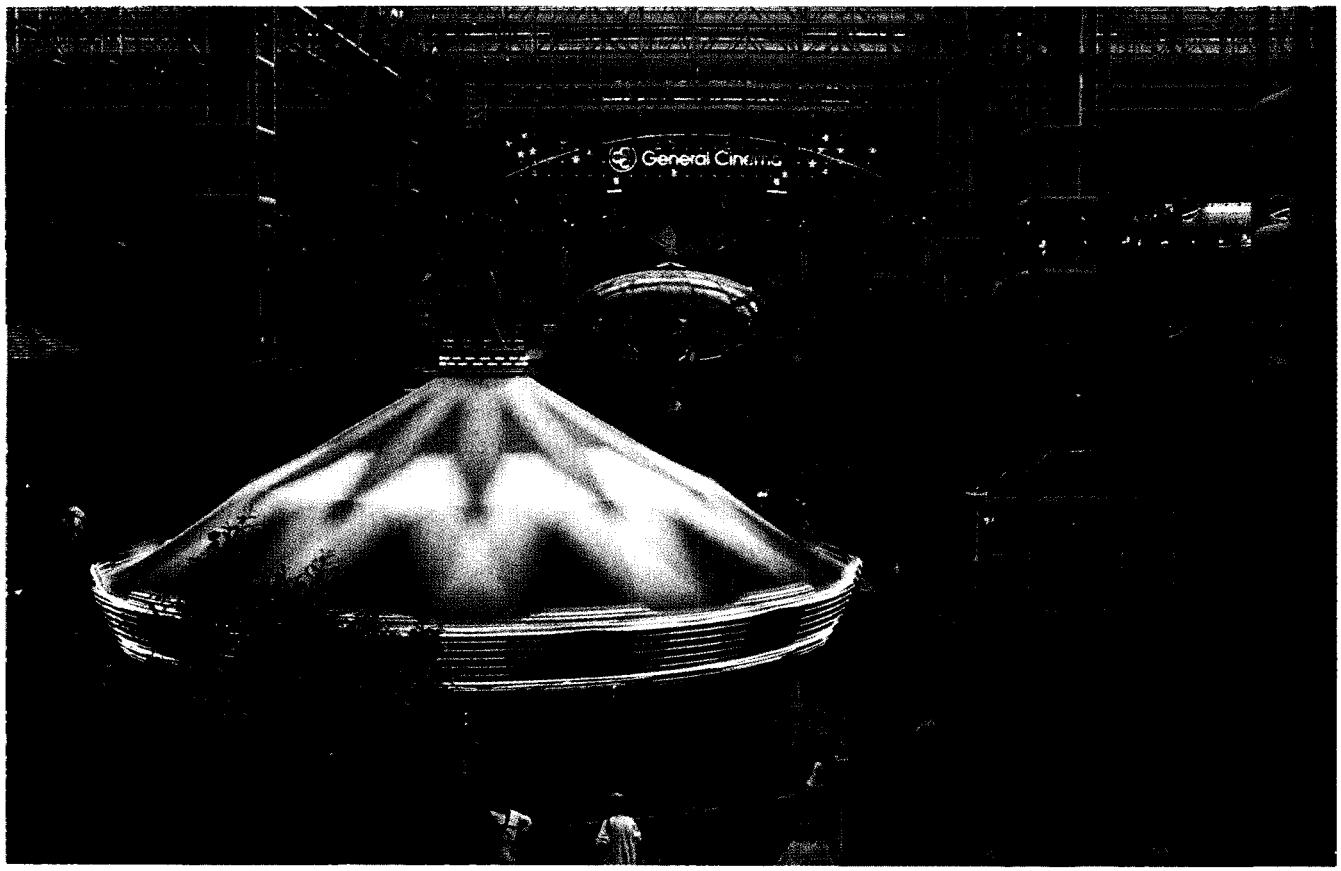
PHIL MUELLER



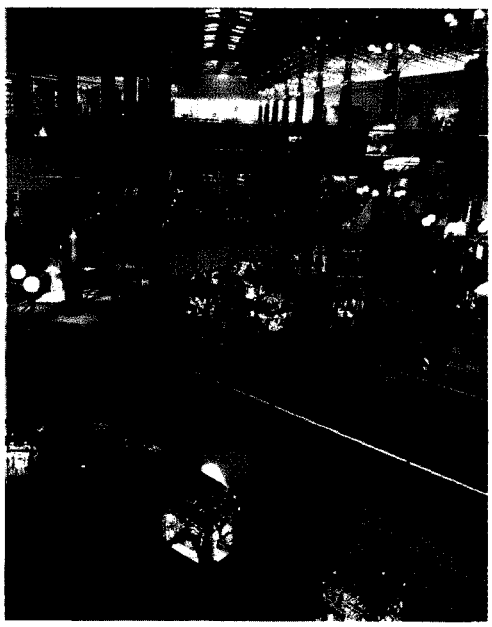
AT THE MALL OF AMERICA, OUTSIDE MINNEAPOLIS, THE ENCLOSED COURTYARD INCLUDES AN AMUSEMENT PARK

Re-creating Downtowns

NOT EVERYONE AGREES THAT MALLS COULD become a new version of the old Main Street. Kenneth Jackson observes in *Crabgrass Frontier* that because they are so self-contained and so uniform, shopping malls in fact represent almost the opposite of downtown areas: "They cater exclusively to middle-class tastes and contain no unsavory bars or pornography shops, no threatening-looking characters, no litter, no rain, and no excessive heat or cold."

In fact large malls do cater to a variety of tastes—they have to. The Mall of America has the usual array of fast-food outlets arranged around two food courts, several "family" restaurants (with occasional live entertainment), an assortment of inexpensive steakhouses, several mainstream Italian eateries, an upscale restaurant serving California cuisine, and a Wolfgang Puck pizza and pasta emporium, the first one outside California. Admittedly, that is less than could be found in a comparable area of Manhattan, but it does represent greater diversity than one would encounter in most small cities.

PHIL MUELLER



The idea that malls cater to only one taste in shopping is likewise unsupported by the evidence: the Mall of America contains Bloomingdale's and The Gap, Brooks Brothers and Sam Goody, Godiva Chocolatier and Radio Shack, Brookstone and video arcades. The number of stores may be greater than at other malls, but their variety is typical. There are even, arguably, pornography shops, in the form of video stores, and plenty of threatening-looking (to me, at least) teenagers—but no panhandlers, which is of course why people like to go to malls. It is true that malls are clean, but the notion that urbanity is somehow represented by litter is surely more a sad comment on the miserable state of most American downtowns (Parisian streets are virtually litter-free) than it is a serious criticism.

Because people in malls are pro-

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tected from rain and from extremes of heat and cold, does that really disqualify malls as urban? The first completely enclosed shopping spaces, or *passages*, emerged in the center of Paris in the early 1800s (many still exist and are well worth a visit). These glass-roofed arcades were widely imitated across the Continent and in England. Nineteenth-century London and Paris also had shopping bazaars, and Milan its famous gallerias; these were large, often multilevel shopping arcades with independent stalls, covered by impressive roofs constructed of cast iron and glass. One of the few surviving examples of a shopping-bazaar building is the splendid GUM department store in Moscow, completed in 1893. Beside the high-blown, extravagant interiors of the Victorian shopping bazaars and department stores, which celebrated shopping and consumerism on a scale unrivaled before or since, the architecture of most contemporary shopping malls appears downright modest.

Still, Jackson does have a point. Downtown areas are made up of open as well as enclosed public spaces—Central Park as well as the concourse of Grand Central Station—and most developers, in their rush to enclose malls completely, may have missed an important opportunity to provide a greater diversity of experience. At least one major mall offers an alternative exemplary model: Horton Plaza, opened by The Hahn Company in downtown San Diego in 1985. The architect, Jon Jerde, turned the tables on the now-traditional enclosed mall and put all the public areas outdoors. Horton Plaza is unorthodox in other ways: it is the most colorful shopping center built since 1925, when Jesse Clyde Nichols included a tower imitating Seville's Giralda in his Spanish-Moorish–style Country Club Plaza, in Kansas City. Jerde also designed the Mall of America, but whereas that is architecturally unadventurous, Horton Plaza is a *tour de force* that includes bits and pieces of almost every stylistic period in history—Egyptian, Renaissance, Moorish, Art Deco, Victorian, Mediterranean. The result resembles a Cecil B. De Mille backlot. It is, needless to say, a popular success.

Horton Plaza is in southern California, but the example of festival marketplaces like Boston's Faneuil Hall Marketplace and Baltimore's Harborplace demonstrates that the use of outdoor spaces is a good idea: it makes shopping malls more stimulating, more pleasurable, and more traditionally urban. Maurice Sunderland, the Calgary-based architect who designed the West Edmonton Mall and prepared the preliminary plans for the Mall of America, is currently working on several large malls that will combine indoor and outdoor areas. I recently asked him whether he thought that malls could eventually become mini-cities. "They haven't reached that stage yet," he answered, "but they could."

One thing that is required to make malls more truly urban is the introduction of some form of permanent housing, which would provide a resident population in addition to shoppers. Housing for the elderly would seem particularly appropriate, not only because of the proximity to shops and indoor promenades but also because malls in many cities are well served by mass transportation.

In the past, developers resisted the use of malls for noncommercial purposes, including housing. Today this has changed. Increasingly, large urban malls are being built with the co-sponsorship of city governments. In half of the thirty-nine downtown shopping-mall projects studied by Bernard Frieden and Lynne Sagalyn, the public share was between 20 and 50 percent of total development cost. In the case of Horton Plaza, the city of San Diego contributed $33 million. As cities become active partners in mall development, social considerations come into play. Cities have already negotiated with mall developers for additional public spaces, mass-transit facilities, and civic spaces such as theaters. Housing should be next.

Power Centers

THE CHIEF OBSTACLE TO THE FURTHER SOCIALizing of the shopping mall may be a new, competitive form of shopping center—what developers call the power center. Power centers are usually moderate in size (about 200,000–400,000 square feet); instead of an assortment of small stores anchored by a department store, they include only two or three deep-discount, or "category-killer," stores—enormous self-service specialty stores with large inventories and low prices. But bargains are not the only attraction. These streamlined centers reflect the desire of many consumers to devote less time to shopping. According to Keith Foxe, of the International Council of Shopping Centers, the average visitor to a power center spends only forty-five to fifty minutes there, as compared with an average of three hours in a regional mall (or more than four hours in the Mall of America). The same desire accounts for the popularity of huge general-merchandise warehouses, which resemble department stores with shopping carts and which are designed to shorten, not prolong, shopping time. Not surprisingly, power centers and discount warehouses, unlike malls, don't have extensive public spaces for strolling. Indeed, in many of them the only public domain is the parking lot. Although some power centers do include nonretail businesses, such as day-care centers and coffee shops, they do not seem likely to develop the same semi-public character as the regional mall, or at least not soon.

The power center is a poor substitute for the shopping mall, which is poised to become a real urban place. The mall is beginning to integrate a variety of commercial and noncommercial functions, to deal with the thorny issue of public access, and to find an architectural balance between enclosed and open public space. In many cases part-public ownership is also changing its character. And it remains, for most Americans, the chief place to meet fellow citizens in a noncombative environment—not behind the wheel of a car but on foot, malling about. □

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FIRST ENCOUNTERS

MARY MCCARTHY AND EDMUND WILSON

ON A SATURDAY morning in October, 1937, the editors of the fledgling *Partisan Review* gathered in their office near Union Square to meet with Edmund Wilson, whom they were courting for the magazine. Wilson enjoyed a cosmopolitan cachet in the New York intellectual scene which they coveted. One editor, Mary McCarthy, had her own agenda, and came in a slinky black dress and a fox stole, remnants of her Vassar days and particularly out of place at the nearby eatery where they all had lunch. It was unclear why, at age twenty-five, she was so anxious to impress this short, stout, squeaky-voiced, forty-two-year-old man who barely spoke to her. But she was. And she did.

Two weeks later Wilson invited her to dinner. Her colleagues on the *Review* were afraid she might disgrace them by not being sufficiently modern in her literary tastes; in a briefing that afternoon, one of them plied her with daiquiris to shore her up for what he said would be a "dry" dinner. Instead, it began with several rounds of Manhattans, and although McCarthy later recalled trying to be scintillating, she also passed out.

An unpromising beginning—but all writers imbibed wildly in those days. Wilson was charmed by McCarthy's bright intelligence, her impulsiveness, her wooing of him. "Apparently I liked him much more than I remember," she said later.

Enough to marry him, and then question why for the rest of her life. It was his prose style, she once said; another time, his classical education, or because he was upper-class and Protestant—that quarter of her own heritage which she preferred. Or it was what he could do for her as a writer, and did—pushing her into creativity. Or perhaps (her Catholic side) it was as punishment for having gone to bed with him—marriage as absolution for sin. As in all failed unions, there are the given reasons and the real reasons. —*Nancy Caldwell Sorel*

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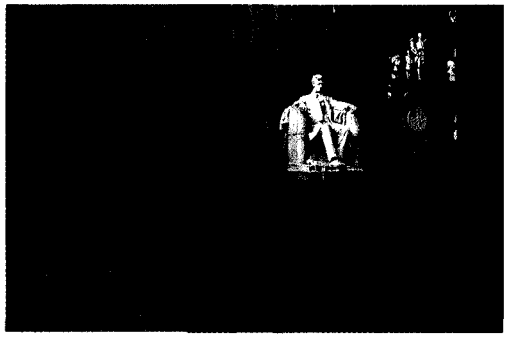
Travel



FELICE FRANKEL

The Bounteous Berkshires

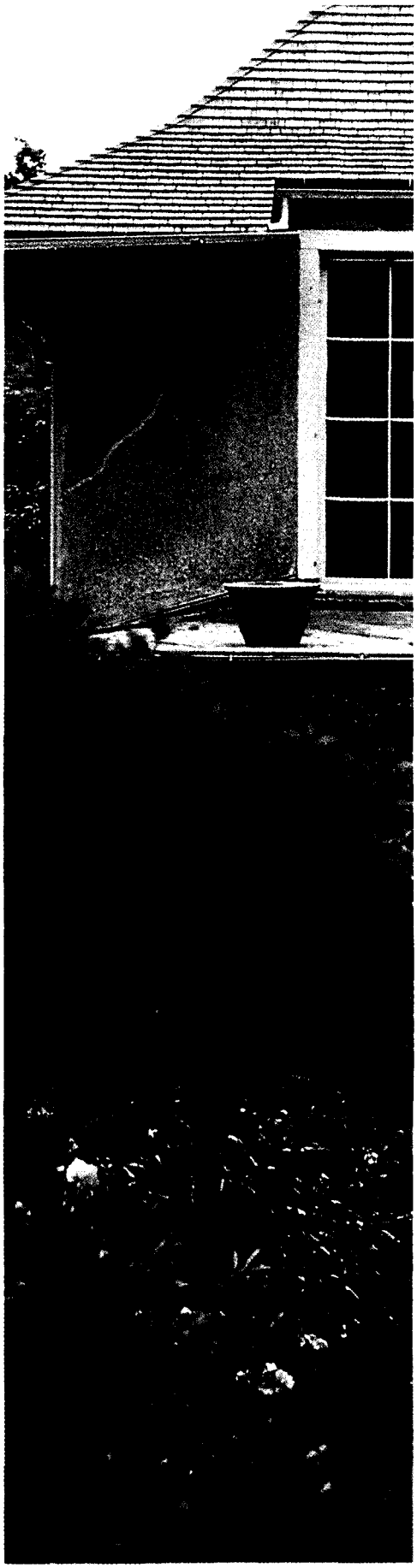
An embarrassment of riches—cultural and otherwise—awaits

by Jack Beatty

THE BERKSHIRE HILLS of western Massachusetts need no introduction from me. Their moon-on-the-meadow charm has been luring travelers and tourists for decades, and has found throbbing articulation in the writings of Edith Wharton, who built a palatial home there (now used by an excellent summer Shakespeare troupe), and Henry James, who drove through the hills with Mrs. Wharton in the days when a motor trip was as liable to detour and delay as one of James's late-manner sentences. Verdant, rife with swimmable lakes, scenic panoramas, lovely unspoiled villages, and mounded hills friendly to the middle-aged hiker, the Berkshires are also one of the preeminent arts places in the country. The vacationer who craves concerts, plays, dance performances, uncrowded art museums, architectural shrines, and stop-the-car New England houses at seemingly every turn in the road will find in the Berkshire Hills what my wife and I found on a recent trip—a cultural dreamscape.

What makes the Berkshires such a cynosure of culture is the pressure of money and taste exerted on them from Boston and New York, each about three hours' drive away. You can actually feel this pressure on Church Street, the main shopping way of the charming hilltop town of Lenox, which we made our base for excursions. The first thing that strikes you about the shops and galleries along this short street is the variety and quality of the objects on display. By a commercial version of natural selection they have been shaped to appeal to seen-everything consumers from the cities. Even a principled non-shopper like me, his head crammed with condemnations of consumerism from Marx to Marcuse, wanted a frightening quantity of the things he saw for their beauty and style—what Bernard Berenson would have called their "tactile values." This was true of the handcrafted pottery in the Hoadley Gallery, as it was of the fabrics and trinketry in a shop called African Magic, as it was of the paintings and artists' products—from candlesticks to jewelry—at the Arkos Gallery, a temple of temptation to one burdened with that common legacy of a liberal-arts education, more taste than money.

It was while performing wholesale triage on our desires in Arkos that we met Linfield and Susan Simon. Bonnie Wohlreich, the stylish proprietor of Arkos, introduced us. We were, she told them, unhappy with our accommodations (we were, in fact, blisteringly mad, a susurrus of rock music through the night conforming to our idea of hell). Did they have a room at their inn? They might, they said promisingly. They were



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MICHAEL CARROLL

people slightly north of us in age who had migrated to the Berkshires from the Midwest in the early 1980s. Linfield Simon studied at Stanford with David Potter, a legendary teacher of American history one of whose works, *People of Plenty*, took on a sudden poignant relevance. We chatted animatedly of books read, films seen, politicians disdained. When, after a quick phone call, the Simons said that we were in luck, they had a room, we accepted with reckless alacrity, reading their politics into their business and picturing a red-shuttered, creaky sort of place smelling of damp books—a liberal intellectual's retreat from the temperate blasts of academe. I had momentarily forgotten that Simon had mentioned that besides having done graduate work in history, he had a law degree from Harvard. Ah, the law. If the taste that picked "Wheatleigh," the name of the Simon establishment, was that of a last-century historian, the cash to finance this rococo pile came from a successful Chicago lawyer.

Wheatleigh, originally a wedding present from a quondam robber baron to his daughter in the 1890s, lies just outside Lenox next to Tanglewood, the summer performance center of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The Italian-villa fountains, the heavy mahogany *unch* the doors make in closing, the inspired food, the bathrooms you could play basketball in, the watercolor views of lakes and distant hills—such details may perhaps be summed up in the fact that the grounds of Wheatleigh were designed by the architect of Central Park, Frederick Law Olmsted. Money and beauty have at Wheatleigh entered into one of their memorable collaborations. Among the many delights we found there, two deserve special mention. We had the pleasure of seeing the cellist Yo Yo Ma perform at Tanglewood in the afternoon and then, with suitably furtive glances, watching him eat dinner with some friends at Wheatleigh that evening. Mr. Ma wore a red carnation in the lapel of his white dinner jacket, and that flower may be said to have punctuated that room, so strongly did it resonate. Musical celebrities stay at Wheatleigh partly because of its incomparability, and also because it is just a

At left and far left, the studio of the sculptor Daniel Chester French, creator of the Lincoln Memorial's Lincoln

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MICHAEL CARROLL

Inside Wheatleigh, a sumptuous inn favored by musical celebrities, ten minutes on foot from Tanglewood

pleasant ten-minute walk from Tanglewood. This is worth mentioning inasmuch as traffic in and out of Tanglewood is deadly, a vexing prelude or coda to the combined restorative effect of music and nature, the latter represented by the lush lawns and generous shade trees of the grounds and the pastoral views they afford.

THE SOCIOLOGIST of leisure should note the exacting—I go so far as to call it decadent—care the picnickers at Tanglewood take with the lunches they eat on the lawns. As I watched the bright big baskets disgorge their contents (the baked ham, the skinned chicken parts, the redolent cheese, the pert pots of mustard, the wine, the two-tone grapes, the French bread, the cunning little cakes), I thought of the small, dark, dented green lunch bucket my father carried to his job every day (the baloney sandwich, the bruised pear, the burnt cookies, the tepid coffee in the leaky Thermos) and I felt inexpressibly sad. One cannot, as perhaps you too have discovered, take a holiday from the deposits of one's past which define one's character, and a striking thing about travel is how unexpectedly new surroundings can ambush the heart with old memories. Such moments are epiphanies, and even if painful, they are touched by the elation of surprise.

My father was an admirer of one of the great works of Daniel Chester French, whose studio lies just off Route 183, a sinuous road from Tanglewood. That work was the Lincoln of the Lincoln Memorial. French's studio and house must be one of the loveliest places in all New England. Tours are given of the studio, a handsome stucco building that fronts on a meadow with cow and backs onto a large formal garden. Every summer the woods behind French's studio host a sculpture show. No visitor to Chesterwood, as the French estate is called, should fail to take this woods-walk through the often bizarre world of contemporary sculpture. "Mister" French, as the guides unfailingly refer to him, paid $8,000 to build his residence back when that was real money, and no doubt paid laughably little for this many-acre slice of paradise. Land is still relatively cheap in the Berkshires, but you would need a portable occupation to live there today.

Norman Rockwell had a portable occupation, but for the last twenty-five years of his life he stayed rooted to one spot, the town of Stockbridge, which not only houses his museum; it *is* his museum. He drew its people for decades. It is fashionable, I suppose, to deride Rockwell. "He was only an illustrator," sniff people who are insensible to the power of his iconography. But as the visitor to his museum in Stockbridge need only look about him to notice, Rockwell continues to move his fellow countrymen and -women as no other artist in any medium, save perhaps Frank Capra, can do. Rockwell made a fortune out of his work, but it celebrates a world of plain people living plain lives exalted by attainably democratic graces like neighborliness, good citizenship, and simple love of country. Any American who can view his Four Freedoms without tearing up has been debauched by modernism. The sinewy man in the flannel shirt, standing up to address a town meeting in the panel on Freedom of Speech, looks as if he might carry a dented lunch bucket to work, but his fellow townspeople are according his remarks grave respect—here speaks a free man. This April a new Rockwell museum opened outside Stockbridge, replacing the simple wooden colonial house on Main Street that had long been Rockwell's shrine. It is by the celebrated architect Robert A. M. Stern, and fundraisers for the Reagan and Bush libraries should seek him out, for he sure knows how to build a presidential library. From its Citizen Kane approach to its elephantinely homey stone supporting walls, the new Norman Rockwell museum shouts money and whispers taste.

Stockbridge is also a theatrical center, the longtime home of one of the great summer theaters in America—the Berkshire Theatre Festival. We saw a play at the festival playhouse by the prolific A. R. Gurney. *The Cocktail Hour* is an autobiographically resonant work about a sensitive playwright son's confrontation with his aging haute-WASP parents during their eponymous evening ritual. Well-acted and attractively staged, *The Cocktail Hour* was toothless—without the beginnings of bite, so much social flattery disguised as social criticism. The reader will forgive me for indulging in a little social criticism myself, but it was hard not to remark the consonance between the

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play's message and the white-trousered, blue-blazered gentlemen and Talbots-accoutered ladies in the audience. "You are all right; this society of ours—yes, it has troubles, but fundamentally it's all right too, full of beauty and culture and well-meaning people who are strangers to panic and emptiness." Such was the emollient message of this play, an appropriate one for a summer theater far from America's cities; and such, it seems to me—which is why I make a point of it—is the seductively complacent message of the Berkshires, the region's spell, why people love to go there.

Jacob's Pillow is an attractively rustic dance-performance theater fifteen miles southeast of Stockbridge in the hamlet of Becket. It was founded in the 1930s by the great dance impresario Ted Shawn, whose goal it was to introduce a masculine element into modern dance. Even today that locution, "modern dance," is frankly intimidating to your middle-aged, meat-eating sort of man. Yet I managed to enjoy the show, though it was hard to feel on one's dignity in that audience of prepubescent girls, who wobbled and giggled and sought frequent refreshment throughout a performance by which they gave every evidence of being ravished.

The Old Inn on the Green is south of Becket in the even tinier hamlet of New Marlborough. Exquisite. Superb. Expensive. Yes, the food is all of those and also transatlantic (French and American). The Old Inn on the Green is a storied eighteenth-century building that once endured Indian attack and now bears up pretty well under a genteel onslaught of tourists. The various dining rooms are lit by candlelight from taper-bearing period chandeliers and from candles on the tables, set in silver holders that might have been made by Paul Revere. In winter and on chill nights in other seasons the rooms are heated by fireplaces that sometimes cough delicious eye-smarting smoke. There are a few slant-floored rooms upstairs, but the main hostelry is down the street at Gedney Farm, a huge former dairy barn that has been remade into a posh rustic inn, with large fireplace-equipped rooms and suites. Here is an ingenious transformation of an indigenous architectural idiom. Pity that the architect responsible didn't win the commission for the Rockwell Museum.

GEORGE W. GARDNER/RAINBOW

A dining room in The Old Inn on the Green

Two final snapshots of the southern Berkshires: the town of Great Barrington and the studio of Richard Bennett, in nearby Housatonic. Great Barrington is a crossroads where the 1950s and the 1990s meet. There are older buildings on Main Street, but the goods displayed in the stores, the marquee of the movie theater, the sign in front of the hardware store, all belong to the fifties in spirit even if that is not their date of origin. Yet around the corner is your gourmet coffee shop with your $7.60 cookie, just to pull you back to the future.

Richard Bennett, whose studio and

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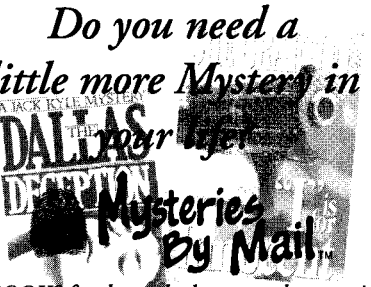

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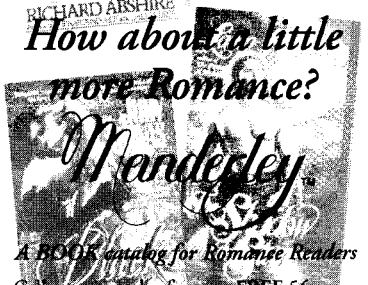

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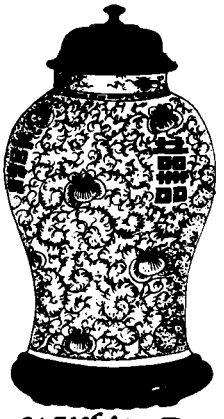

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showroom, The Great Barrington Pottery, is on Route 41, is an artist who, though a man of pronounced individuality, may stand for his numerous brethren in these hills, the makers who create the beautiful objects for sale in the shops—yes, even in the shoppes. Bennett is a potter under the spell of the Orient, a student of Chinese and Japanese art, language, literature, and philosophy. His vases, cups, dishes, bowls, and platters are gorgeous to behold. He used to perform an authentic Japanese tea service in an adjacent tea room, but interest in it dwindled recently, as things Japanese became more threatening to Americans. Bennett is brusque and intense in the way of artists, but should you light on one of his topics—Ireland, Korea, Japan, the decline in American education since he left the Boston Latin School—you won't be able to shut him up, nor will you want to, for he brings to his talk some of the energy and elegance of his work.

My favorite cultural artifact in the Berkshires, though, is the product not of any one artist but of the collective care and the collective living we call history. It is the town of Williamstown, in the extreme northwest corner of Massachusetts, named for the college it houses, a fine private institution. Williamstown's charms are hard to exaggerate. There are the starkly graceful stone buildings of the college, which flank the main street like monuments from another time; the tall bent trees; the wide sidewalks; the steep little hill just above the village center; the distant views of fields and woods; the bracing air of plain living and high thinking. (We asked directions of a professor of French literature who just happened to be reading John Rawls's demanding *A Theory of Justice*—and this Matterhorn of a book on her summer vacation.) In the deep, tenured quiet of the side streets are a number of handsome Victorian houses, which with their ample gardens and trees are visually delectable.

Nestled against the Vermont and New York borders, Williamstown is an art object in itself, but it also boasts two splendid art museums, a theater, a late-night cabaret, and a home-cooking restaurant I cannot recommend highly enough. The Clark Art Institute, on the outskirts of town, has a varied collection, though it is best known for its roomful of Renoirs and other Impressionists. No traveler to the Berkshires should miss immersion in the color bath of that room. The Clark's setting—the estatelike lawns leading up to it, the steep grassy hills rising up behind—makes a suitably majestic frame for one of the great small museums in the country. Often overlooked in the Clark's shadow is the fine Williams College Museum of Art. Located on the Williams campus, it has a serendipitous basic collection, featuring artists one has read about but never seen; in addition, it hosts traveling shows of the work of notable contemporary artists. The sculptor Kiki Smith had some of her pieces on display there when we visited, and to view her gore-dripping plastic body parts was to undergo a visual mugging. Here was the kind of imagery people go to the Berkshires to escape.

The same might be said of the play we saw at the justly celebrated Williamstown Theatre, where many off-Broadway vehicles get early exposure. That play was *2*, by Romulus Linney, about the last days of Hermann Göring. After we witnessed film clips of the Holocaust, coming out in the bright sunshine between acts felt awkward, and I understood better than I had at Stockbridge the quandary of the summer theatre—too dark a play can clang incongruously against the season and its mood. Next morning, at the Cobble Café, a marvelous, inexpensive eatery on Spring Street in the village, we saw one of the actors from *2* having a late breakfast. We complimented him on his work; he thanked us and then held up the front page of that morning's *New York Times*, and said something like "This play is so relevant." We looked at the paper; the phrase "ethnic cleansing" leaped out at us.

If you can't get away from your character on a vacation, history dogs you too. You make neither, and must bear with both. To renew the freshness of your spirit for that task, try a culture tour of the Berkshires. It will contain just enough of what Dostoevsky called "the realism of real life" to keep your soul in fighting trim, but also enough idyllic escapism to make you believe that the Berkshire whispers of happiness through beauty are true, and meant for you to hear. □

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PAUL KOLNICK

A. Mr. B.

The reality of George Balanchine's absence is at last sinking in

by Laura Jacobs

"I DON'T HAVE to tell you that Mr. B. is with Mozart and Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky," Lincoln Kirstein said at a New York City Ballet matinee on Saturday, April 30, 1983. No direct mention of death. "I do want to tell you how much he valued this audience . . . [a] marvelous, supportive, cohesive family who understands the family that's about to perform now."

For George Balanchine—choreographer, ballet master, and co-founder of City Ballet—meaning, like dancing, was never set, never static. Kirstein's euphemisms were a nod to Balanchine's own kind of communication—his penchant for answering questions with fables, pleas with parables, boos with beatitudes. Everything flowed into something else. An example: Balanchine would often choose a perfume for a ballerina by which to define her essence and denote her presence within the theater, thus casting his dancers as fragrance, as air, as life.

George Balanchine and Stephanie Saland rehearsing Apollo, *1980*

What happened the day Balanchine stopped breathing? As Kirstein implied in his curtain speech, Mr. B. was merely elevated. The small, elegant man with the high-curved brow had always looked down his Georgian nose, and now he would be doing the same thing in heaven. And in the ten years since his death, heaven is where he has stayed. Regardless of their religious beliefs, City Ballet fans and dancers continually refer to Balanchine as being "up there."

In an era quick to deconstruct genius, Balanchine's reputation has remained unsullied. Tell-alls have been written by dancers who would know, yet they have had nothing very rebellious to tell. The petty slights are just that—petty—when viewed next to portrayals of the master's wit and calm as a director, the fire-and-ice poetry of his art. The real story is apparent in the larger metaphor these books share. Gelsey Kirkland's *Dancing on My Grave* (1986) took the psychosexual route: Balanchine was the cold father to her needy daughter. Suzanne Farrell's *Holding On to the Air* (1990) was blithe-spirited, she the Broadway ingenue to his deep-pocketed Daddy-O. Edward Villella's book was biblical: he called it *Prodigal Son* (1992), and guess who the patriarch was. Meanwhile, Balanchine's four wives, all of them still living, have been as discreet as painted saints.

Balanchine as deity always made sense within the company. City Ballet was founded by and for him; its ballets were of his making, its dancers were cultivated to his taste, his whim was law. But even outside the company Balanchine is quoted like Scripture. For dance critics and scholars, most of whom are in agreement that he is the greatest choreographer who ever lived, time might be measured B.Mr.B. and A.Mr.B. A chart could be drawn up plotting where dance critics fall in the famous five stages of grieving. *The New York Times*, for instance, with its annual insistence that the dancing at City Ballet is better than ever, when everyone knows that it is less than it was, is clearly in Denial.

Elsewhere, Bargaining has filled the years. The black hole left by Balanchine's death was so unthinkable that critics scanned the skyline for a star, and choreographers like Peter Martins (Balanchine's successor at City Ballet), Mark Morris, and even Twyla Tharp have been lionized—though when their work has been less Balanchinian and more their own, disappointed fans have phased back into Anger. In some quarters there is Acceptance. Hard-line "manes" (short for "balletomanes") have gone to City Ballet with lowered expectations, or stopped going altogether. The great critic Arlene Croce, tenured at *The New Yorker*, publishes so infrequently that her reviews have begun to read like dismayed bulletins from the beyond. Other dance critics are boning up on theater and music, or writing about recipes. Having arrived a half generation late to the scene but soon enough to see the company under Balanchine's spell, I swing between impatience with the solemnity and solemnity itself.

Beginning May 4, City Ballet marks the tenth anniversary of Balanchine's departure to join "Mozart and Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky" with a Balanchine Celebration—eight weeks of pro-

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gramming including seventy-three of the master's 425 works, in roughly chronological order. The industry of the preparations, however, does not unmix the emotions in the hearts of City Balletomanes—fervor, despair, loyalty, and malaise. In the language of arts marketing, the tenth anniversary is the first you can reasonably retail. In the language of Hallmark, the tenth is tin. But in the amorphous language of City Ballet, isn't "celebration" just another euphemism? Might not "retrospective" be a better word? Is Balanchine "with" us, watching us? Or what?

THE DECADE has witnessed a passionate reaction to a loss unique in the history of the performing arts. It isn't just that Balanchine was one of those rare and blessed artists who create freely over a long life and are recognized before bitterness sets in; it could be argued that he was the only artist ever to create an audience capable of understanding that his art depended upon his being alive. This audience understood the catch—that dance is ultimately atmosphere, a discipline with a distinctly problematic relationship to posterity. Balanchine himself said, quoting Mayakovsky, "I am not a man but a cloud in trousers." The music of Mozart or the cutouts of Matisse or the films of Bergman: all retain the master's touch. A ballet, once its choreographer is no longer there to superintend the details, is vulnerable to dancers who drop steps, coaches who change tone, directors who sideline the dance.

So fans went nightly to Balanchine's theater and joined their lives with the life of the company. Like opera buffs, yes, but unlike them in that Balanchine's view of the world—his choreographic vistas and convictions—was just as important as his ballerinas. It wasn't Massenet on Monday, Tippett on Tuesday, Wagner on Wednesday; it was Balanchine, Balanchine, Balanchine. And it was more than that.

Balanchine's repertory was an Arden, an Eden (complete with lithe Liliths), in which he stood knee-deep in dancers, the worker bee buzzing among daisy chains of corps girls. His grave and gossamer garden ballet, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is the great full-length ballet of the second half of this century, in competition only with his *Nutcracker*. Or the repertory was a kingdom, haunted and heightened by echoes of imperial Russian grandeur. Or it was a laboratory, in which dances like *The Four Temperaments*, *Agon*, and *Episodes* took the measure of human clay. Balanchine was caretaker, czar, Rasputin, Newton, and Einstein, all in one.

Unless Balanchine lost interest in a work, ballets could be counted on to reappear, bound as they were in a Brigadoon-like continuum. (Note the two plaid ballets, *Scotch Symphony* and *Union Jack*.) Isolated from war, peace, and progress, the repertory offered audiences a reassuring imitation of eternity. But despite the number of works that have a heavenly purr (*Chaconne*, *Square Dance*, *Divertimento No. 15*, *Mozartiana*), or end with ascension (*Apollo*, *Serenade*, *The Nutcracker*), Balanchine himself had no illusions about the immortality of his art. When asked how he planned to preserve his ballets for dancers and audiences later on, he answered, "I don't have any later on."

He also said, "*Après moi, le Board.*" Like so many artistic organizations that continue after the founder dies, City Ballet has undergone corporatization. The title that was simply Ballet Master is now, for Peter Martins, Ballet Master in Chief. The company has become deliberately high-profile, the corps dancers pictured in the *Times* Styles section doing gala dips at gala dinners (if only they could all do one, correct, *sous-sus*). Yet, oddly enough, while City Ballet has become more Society, it has become less social.

Balanchine was a stickler for steps—the nouns of his vocabulary, the syllables of his own loquacious and sociable soul. He wanted to see them all—every last flicflac and gargouillade—and, soon enough, so did the audience. The bond between his two families, awkward at first, grew into a wordless, endless dialogue on the subject of shared delights and shared values. The ethics of classical dance were clear: beauty was rigor, clarity was truth, personal liberty was not the goal of a fantastic physical decorum but a startling fringe benefit. Electric articulation served the dance, the dancer, the fan, the fantasy. Like a physicist, Balanchine spent his hours in class and rehearsal battling entropy—the smugness of "professionalism," the slippage of age. This was tantamount to battling time. "What's the matter with now?" was his rhetorical commandment and the moral to every story.

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THE CITY BALLET repertory is still the world's largest and most coherent collection of Balanchine ballets. But it is no longer a loop of certainty, two and a half hours at a time, eight curtains a week, in which one man's vision of how to live in the hours allotted us is written in sweat, satin, and sound. In these past ten years the repertory has had to make room for new ballets by living choreographers, lowering the Balanchine quotient. Mr. B., of course, would sanction this. He never underestimated the audience's need for new entertainments or the dancers' need to have new roles in which to find themselves. But not one of these ballets has been of the first rank. And strong, sustained, meticulous, growing performances from dancers have been so few that you can tick them off on your fingers: Kyra Nichols, deep in snowbound solitude in *Diamonds;* Maria Calegari, phosphorescent in a late-eighties *Midsummer*; and Suzanne Farrell, majestic and mercurial in every step. After these performances one hoped that the spirit might be catching, that young dancers would follow the *frisson*. But except for lightning-bug flashes they have not. It was Balanchine in the wings who showed the way.

It isn't in the nature of Balanchine's following to sit quietly while the dialogue diminishes. Martins, who has borne the burden of stepping into the father's shoes without the father's gifts, has learned that City Ballet wags can be wicked—they still want to talk. In recent seasons, if you eavesdropped at intermission, you'd have heard Martins's work *Delight of the Muses* referred to as "Twilight of the Muses," and *Ecstatic Orange* called "Agent Orange." Looking over the Balanchine Celebration schedule, I couldn't help having reservations after the initial bliss. In a company of ninety-eight, of whom only thirty ever worked with Balanchine and many have never seen, let alone danced, a third of these ballets, can the celebration be more than a corporate project, an overnight cram? And yet my brochure is already checked and circled, a mess of must-sees.

Remember the woman in the "L'Air du Temps" ad, her arms and skirt pinwheeling? That was Suzanne Farrell, Balanchine's best muse, the west wind to his lyre. Farrell retired from City Ballet in 1989, choosing her farewell from among the twenty-three ballets that Balanchine made or revived for her; she danced the fevered reverie "Der Rosenkavalier," the last movement of Balanchine's *Vienna Waltzes*. It is a ballet that carries its own intonations of ending, of an era consuming itself in grand whorls and pensive eddies. But Farrell also chose it because she had had hip surgery, and her working vocabulary was narrowed. The solitary waltzing of "Rosenkavalier"—this she could still perform exactly, impulsively, and, therefore, on the Mont Blanc scale she and we were used to. Perhaps, on the mountaintop, she saw Balanchine. Many think they haven't seen him since.

Postscript: The perfume he bought for Farrell was called Réplique. The last traces are in the last bottle he gave her. What does the name mean? Balanchine's eternal imperative: "Reply." □

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Books

Wilson Agonistes

by David Burner

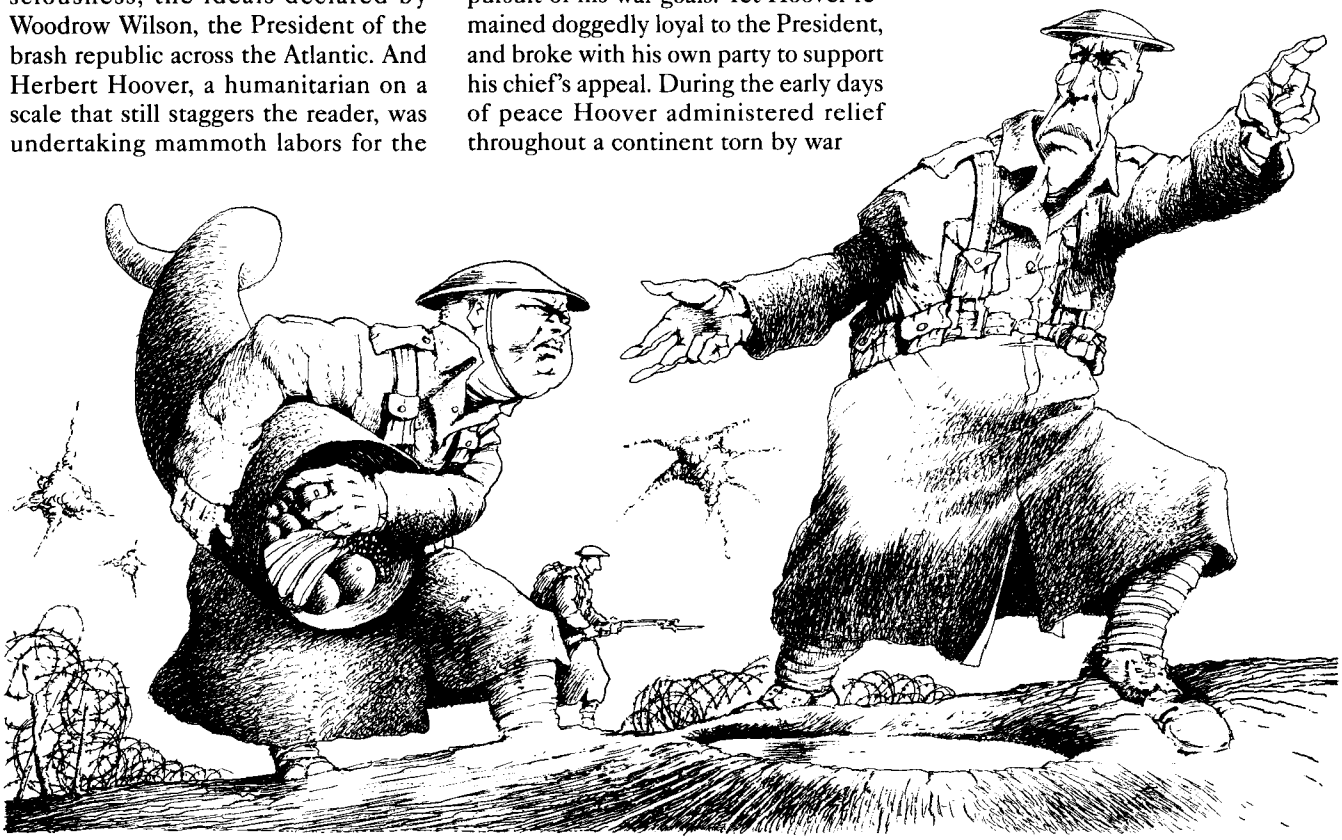
THE ORDEAL OF WOODROW WILSON
by Herbert Hoover, with a new introduction by Senator Mark Hatfield. Woodrow Wilson Center/Johns Hopkins University, $12.95.

THE GREAT WAR had ended, and the old order of Europe lay in heaps of rubble. Fields were blasted into cold mud, sliced with trenches, laced with barbed wire. Refugees drifted across meaningless borders, while armies of revolutionaries and reactionaries fought to impose their separate visions of the future on stretches of ungoverned land. Victors ravenous for spoils professed, with some sincere part of their split consciousness, the ideals declared by Woodrow Wilson, the President of the brash republic across the Atlantic. And Herbert Hoover, a humanitarian on a scale that still staggers the reader, was undertaking mammoth labors for the fulfillment of what he defined as Wilson's goals and his own.

The reissue of Hoover's remembrances of the period after the First World War, first published in 1958, by McGraw-Hill, tells a familiar story: Wilson's hopes, the greed of the Allies, the President's disastrous refusal to compromise with the Senate on the League of Nations, the public turn against the Treaty of Versailles in the election of 1920. No one, certainly not Wilson himself, could have been in a better position to tell that story than was Herbert Hoover. His tremendous effort with the Belgian Relief Commission in bringing aid to occupied Belgium had given him unofficial connections with the Wilson Administration even before the entrance of the United States into the war. During U.S. participation in the conflict he served as domestic food administrator, while continuing with the commission. The strong-willed Wilson, in his 1918 call for a Democratic Congress, gratuitously suggested that the Republicans had been obstructionists to the pursuit of his war goals. Yet Hoover remained doggedly loyal to the President, and broke with his own party to support his chief's appeal. During the early days of peace Hoover administered relief throughout a continent torn by war and revolution, meanwhile advising Wilson on the needs especially of Eastern Europe, where Bolsheviks and rightists battled against emerging democratic-libertarian regimes.

So Hoover was an insider as to the Administration's objectives and actions, or as much of one as the increasingly sick and remote President would allow. And from his relief efforts he knew what were the dangers and promises that came with peace and the fall of the German, Austrian, Russian, and Turkish empires.

In his book Hoover retold events that were widely known. And Wilson came out looking much like the figure in the standard histories: magnificently broad in his vision, and hopelessly ensnared in the unnecessary detail of it; relentlessly moral, and ruinously moralistic; compassionate and generous to the stricken peoples of Europe, and quite other than generous to his friends; heroic and self-destructive in will. Hoover's book was meant as a tribute to his former chief, but it is easy to suspect that



ILLUSTRATIONS BY WILLIAM BRAMHALL

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anger and hurt might underlie a portrayal that presents the worst as well as the best in one of our greatest statesmen. What makes Hoover's memoir especially valuable to readers already familiar with the story are matters of tone and interpretation which Hoover himself, in his plodding and colorlessly earnest telling, probably did not notice that he was making available.

For example, Hoover's account indirectly helps to correct the notion that isolationism and Wilsonian internationalism were polarities. They were, of course, at political odds. But a look backward reveals how closely both adhered to a prevailing American mentality.

Hoover did not analyze the isolationists, and rarely even mentioned them. But students of the period need to keep in mind that isolationists at the time were not the stingy and xenophobic conservatives of the late 1940s, rhetorically anticommunist but offended that the United States should do anything effortful or costly to help Western Europe keep out of the hands of Stalin. Nor were they ethnic purists of the Patrick Buchanan variety. Helping people, or nations, has not been high on the wish list of twentieth-century American conservatives. No, the progressive isolationists of Wilson's time, sufficiently rooted in ethnic communities to be partly immune to xenophobia, argued simply that we would do neither ourselves nor the Old World a service by becoming entangled in Europe, and could be more useful if we perfected the example of our democratic institutions. That assumption contains its share of arrogance and condescension—but those are vices that Wilsonians could not claim to be superior to, and that at their worst lack the meanness of more recent isolationism. What Hoover's book has to offer, though, relates to Wilsonian internationalism, such as it was; and there is much in Hoover's recollections to indicate, without the author's intent, how much the Wilsonians shared with their putative opponents.

THE LEADING evidence is Wilson's refusal during the war to call the United States an Ally. We were, he insisted, in an association with the Allies: hence the phrase "Allied and Associated Powers." The technicality makes some sense. In Europe the conflict was in part for territorial boundaries that could mean nothing to

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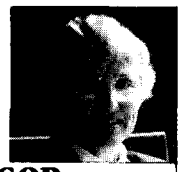

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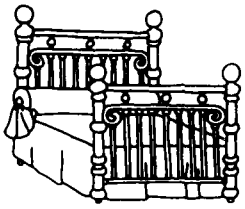

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us. The stakes were an imperial dominion and a commercial advantage for which Britain was surely more our potential rival than was Germany. Self-interest was among our motives for wishing for Allied success—very cold motives of finance and commerce, if some careful historians are to be believed—but they differed at least in detail from the ambitions that drove the Allies themselves. Wilson, in his fastidious aloofness from the term "Allies," was to an extent doing nothing more than keeping his nation clear of the squabbles that he rightly saw as having fueled the war in the first place. We were associated with the Allies because we had certain things to straighten out in the theater of war, notably the matter of submarine warfare. We were not allied with France in a hostility toward Germany which went back before the Franco-Prussian War and its territorial settlements, or with Britain in her industrial and commercial competition with the Germans. Nor did Wilson wish to commit us to rearranging the map of Europe on terms that were important only to Europeans.

Wilson, however, intended more than a merely strategic distancing of his country from endless and exhausting European quarrels. The United States had not yet become irretrievably entangled in the rest of the world. The Atlantic and Pacific oceans were still traversable only by boat. Hiroshima and Nagasaki, My Lai and our support of death-squad regimes—such evidence that in foreign policy we would share Europe's fall from Edenic purity remained in the future. What we had already been doing south of our border was apparently not sufficiently coherent and prominent to reveal its meanings even to Wilson, who was responsible for some of it. Wilson actually believed that we differed from the Allies not only in the specifics of our aims but also because we had the geographical and historical good fortune to be free of any greed that reached beyond our borders, and he wished to assert the difference in the very language of our alliance. The President, in short, was himself something of an isolationist in outlook, just as, in their own way, the progressive isolationists of his time were internationalist in their commitment to the perfection of political and economic justice.

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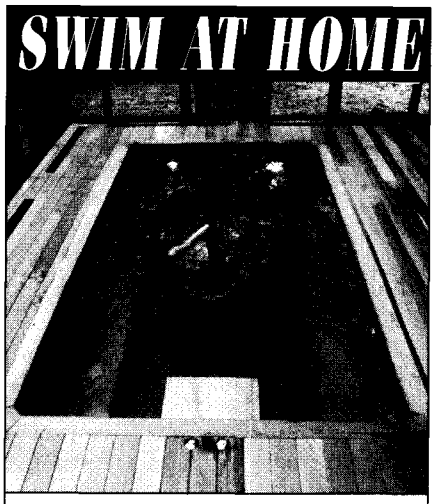

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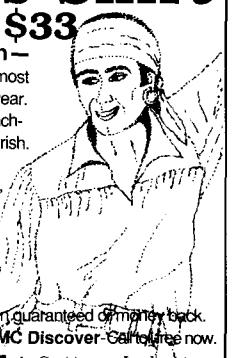

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desirable for any nation but especially so for a country convinced of its moral separateness, dictated the President's insistence during the war on keeping American forces under separate command. It guided the Wilsonians also in the early days of peace. Some of them, including Secretary of State Robert Lansing and Hoover himself, disliked the idea of the President's sitting in on the Peace Conference. Frank I. Cobb, the editor of the New York *World* and an assistant to Colonel Edward House in Paris, argued in a memorandum dated November 4, 1918, that in sitting down with other world leaders Wilson would lose "all the power that comes from distance and detachment." Cobb continued, "Instead of remaining the great arbiter of human freedom he becomes merely a negotiator dealing with other negotiators." Wilson went, and perhaps for the better, though it is hard to imagine what he salvaged there, or could have salvaged. A telegram of November 7 from Hoover to Joseph P. Cotton, the representative of the Food Administration in Europe, advised that as the major supplier of food and other materials for postwar relief and reconstruction, the United States would not put its resources under the direction of an Allied board.

There was a brief and interesting moment of insight in Wilson's nearly isolationist caution about entanglements. He had proposed mandates as an alternative to annexations of lands and peoples liberated from the fallen empires, his idea being that the mandates would be handed to small rather than large nations. The instant of insight came in an address of February 28, 1919, by the President to the Democratic National Committee. He observed that for the United States to reject any mandate role might smack of "Pharisaical cleanliness." In time, and with Wilson's acquiescence, the big countries got the mandates. Hoover observed that Wilson was fooled in believing that the Old World powers would make the slightest practical distinction between mandates and imperial possessions. As infuriating as Wilson's posture of uncompromising rectitude can be to a present-day historian, the issue of mandates reveals the bind he was in. A bit more of the Pharisaical cleanliness that was to be the President's chief vice in his dealings with the Senate might here have been in order. He could not have prevented acquisitions, defined as mandates or not. But a recognition of the whole grab for what it was, and a refusal to countenance it in any form, would at least have rescued language from the violation that was done to the ideals on which the League had been founded.

In the end, as the issue of mandates in a sin-sullied world shows, Wilson's tremendous will and his determination to make the globe saner came up against contradictions inherent in the realities of the time. Compromise with the Allies did not work, nor did a rejection of compromise with the Senate. Can it be said with assurance that reversing those approaches would have worked either?

The resolution among the Wilsonians during and just after the war to keep the nation clean of the evils of Europe makes all the more puzzling Wilson's later rejection of Henry Cabot Lodge's reservations about the League Covenant. It is a puzzle that Hoover did not address. Even with reservations, strong or mild, the Covenant would have bound the United States more closely to Europe than seems consistent with the thinking of the President who had feared to call his country an Ally. Wilson's reasoning is clear enough. If a signatory could in effect write its own treaty, the whole of Versailles, including the good in that badly marred document, would have been compromised—or so the President thought. But that reads more like a quibble than a substantive objection. Wilson would doubtless have believed that even, and especially, an unqualified signature on the treaty and on the League document could have allowed the United States to remain something of an outsider, lending itself carefully but cooperatively to the making of the future. Still, it is a curious mixture on the part of Wilson and the Wilsonians, this compound will to distance their country from the fallen world and yet enter into it.

An observer can reason consistencies into Wilson's mind. Perhaps, though, that mind was the richer for its inconsistencies, as it attempted to find for the nation some role that would negate neither autonomy nor cooperation, practicality nor virtue.

Whether the United States is to be enmeshed in the troubles of the rest of

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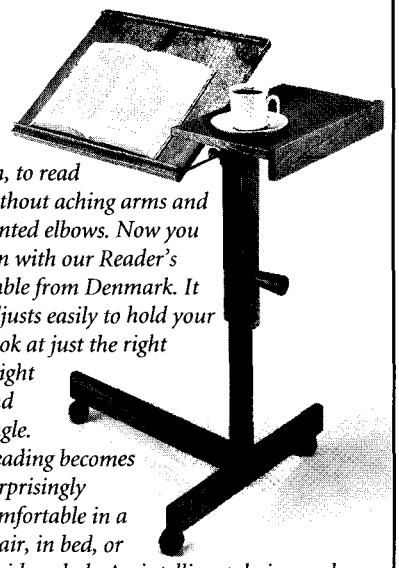

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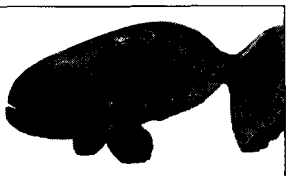

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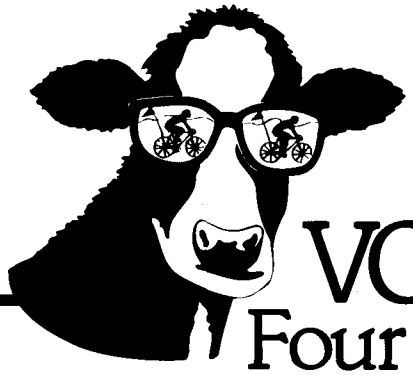

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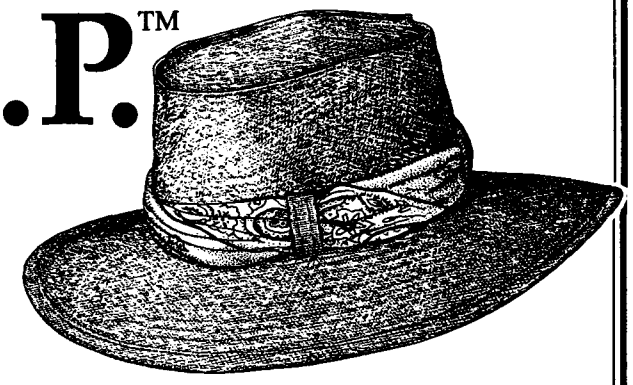

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the world has ceased to be an issue. The terms of the engagement—more particularly, the proper compounding of virtue and strategy—will never stop being a question. It is part of Wilson's place in history that his struggles were an asking, an enactment of the question at a vital moment. The same is true of Herbert Hoover, who as the administrator of relief activities that spanned a continent had to make spot calculations about the needs of economies, the course of revolutions, and the ways in which relief and diplomacy could alter events. And Hoover's simple recounting of his role reveals essentially a statesman without Cabinet position and a diplomat without portfolio more consistent in moral judgments than his successors in the days of the Cold War.

This committed spokesman for enlightened capitalism, this early enemy of Bolshevism and all its works, would not have understood recent neoconservatives and their arcane distinctions between the atrocities of the right and the atrocities of the left. The major manifestations of Bolshevism, Hoover commented in a letter to Wilson dated March 28, 1919, were confined "to areas of former reactionary tyranny" and warranted from free and comfortable Americans some sympathy for "these blind gropings for better social conditions." Imagine the sputtering that such comments would have elicited in the lesser conservatism of the 1980s. Having described the brutality and mass murder that took place during a temporary communist rule in Riga, Latvia, Hoover protested against a "White Terror" that followed the defeat of the Red. Specifically in the case of Hungary, Hoover opposed the West's restoring or propping up reactionaries, even when the shoring up would be in the face of the left. These sentiments of uncompromising hostility to the Bolsheviks' opposite likenesses in brutality, remember, do not represent only the thinking of Hoover in 1919. They are the views also of the reminiscing Hoover of 1958, in the bleaker days of the Cold War, when even liberal American anticommunism was virtually oblivious of any evil that did not proceed from Moscow or Beijing.

Equally a measure of Hoover's brand of free-market progressivism is his comment, in a letter of December,

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1918, intended for the President, that hunger abroad made an increase in food production in the United States and the prevention of spoilage a moral obligation. Hoover, the engineer and administrator of Quaker upbringing, looked upon the production and distribution of life's necessities as a fundamental reason for work, to be undertaken not merely for profit but because it was the point of being a producer or a distributor. He happened to consider a well-regulated capitalism to be the efficient means to those ends. Any financial gain to the producer or the distributor was well and good. But Hoover did not reduce work and administration to the mechanisms and acquisitive motives that have appealed to other champions of capitalism.

Hoover's remarks in the 1918 memorandum, like his entire experience in administering food production at home and relief abroad, are consonant with the similarity that others detected between him and the social scientist Thorstein Veblen, a brilliantly crotchety admirer of modern industry and enemy of capitalism. Veblen expected the austere methods of twentieth-century technology to awaken in engineers and workers a dedication to exact workmanship as a severe virtue in itself and an act of provision for the human race. Veblen would remove the capitalists from the process; Hoover would instruct them in social conscience. But both belong to an age also characterized by Wilsonian resolve.

The handsome introduction by Mark Hatfield to this reissue of Hoover's memoir sketches the previous separate careers of these two remarkable public figures, who for all their differences complemented each other in the making of history. For a brief time the progressive Republican and the progressive Democrat were a logical pair. Later, when Hoover's politically disastrous presidency and his defeat had turned him into an embittered conservative, he seemed an uncompromising enemy of the liberalism that Democrats of the 1930s and 1940s somewhat too easily traced back to Woodrow Wilson. President Harry Truman's admiring use of Hoover lessened the distance, and here the thoughtfully respectful commentary of a leading Republican liberal senator helps further to replant Hoover in a tradition of American progressivism. □

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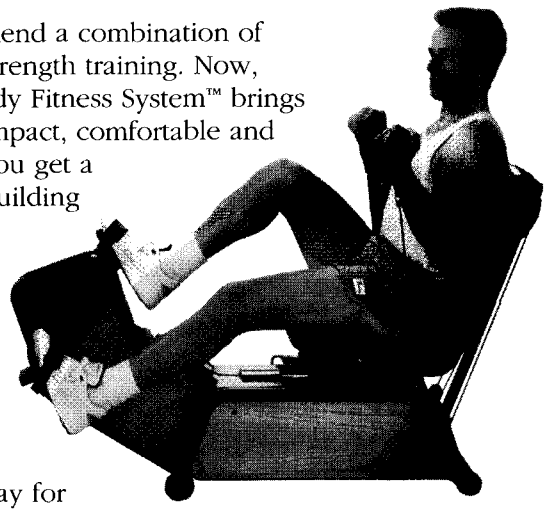

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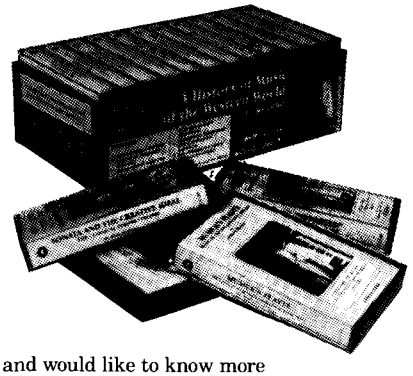

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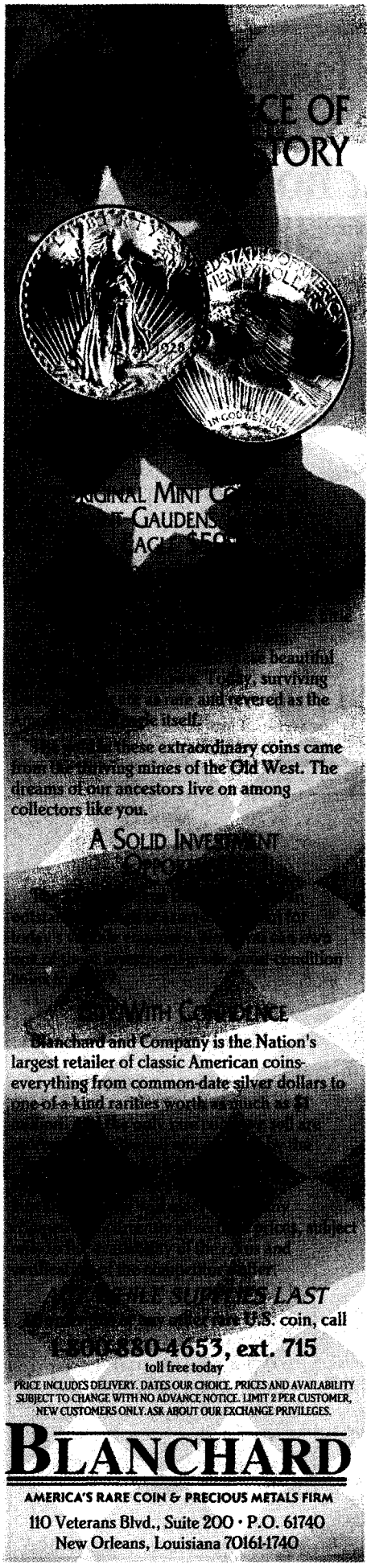

The Engineer as Novelist

by Dennis Drabelle

CATAPULT: A Timetable of Rail, Sea, and Air Ways to Paradise
by Vladimír Páral, translated by William Harkins. Catbird Press/Garrigue, $10.95 (paper).

THE FOUR SONYAS
by Vladimír Páral, translated by William Harkins. Catbird Press/Garrigue, $22.95.

AMONG OTHER disasters, the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia cost that country the presence of two leading novelists, Milan Kundera and Josef Škvorecký. By way of explaining Škvorecký's flight into exile, Danny Smirický, the Škvorecký character who has served as his creator's alter ego through several books, acknowledged being "too old to write for the desk drawer."

Kundera's and Škvorecký's moves did no lasting damage to their careers: from France and Canada, respectively, the two men have become figures in world literature. Yet at least one Czech novelist, the former chemical engineer Vladimír Páral, stayed home and managed to write for the bookstalls without truckling noticeably to the regime. Now, with the publication in English of two novels by Páral, American readers can begin to take his considerable measure.

From among a dozen possibilities Catbird Press has selected *Catapult*, Páral's third novel (1967), and *The Four Sonyas*, his fifth (1971), both translated by William Harkins, an emeritus professor of Slavic languages at Columbia University. Although the Velvet Revolution and the Czech-Slovak divorce may have blunted the force of Páral's political satire, these specimens of his work retain much comic appeal. Together they suggest the profile of a storyteller with protractor—a writer whose training as an engineer keeps his febrile imagination from running away with him.

Catapult is a witty, headlong merger of stream of consciousness and the novel of midlife male angst. Its protagonist—a picaresque hero on a short leash—is thirty-three-year-old Jacek Jost, a chemical engineer at a textile plant in Usti nad Labem (Usti on the Elbe), Páral's own North Bohemian home town. Jacek has become bored with his preposterously easy job, gratingly perfect wife, and adorably baby-talking daughter—dismayed to find that his curriculum vitae is all curriculum and no vita. Understandably for someone living in a small, landlocked country, he daydreams of escaping into vast horizons—to a Mediterranean resort he once visited, which is especially appealing because it faces the bedazzling North African coast; or along the Elbe River, which he maps out in his mind, rehearsing the litany of ports and borders en route to the North Sea.

Tucking his daughter in one night, he berates himself: "Flee, go away without a word, or get divorced before something horrible happens . . . you'll never make up your mind to say that first word." Instead, he tries to stir up his life on the sly, behaving erratically at work and placing a personal ad (a phenomenon that must have caught on earlier in Czechoslovakia than it did here), winnowing out the replies, and setting himself up with seven mistresses in as many nearby towns.

All this thrashing around has a single purpose: to position Jacek so that fate will yank him out of his rut and catapult him somewhere else. Páral's central and, I think, original insight has to do with the joy we take occasionally—and some of us habitually—in placing ourselves in the path of inexorable forces rather than deciding what we want and setting out to obtain it.

Páral sketches Jacek in a cantering style that veers from incident to incident and voice to voice, often in the same sentence: "My wife has the sincerest blue eyes in the world, and Jacek quickly drew her to him." Páral's many narrative antics include varying the typeface to accommodate such material as the banal replies to Jacek's ad ("My hobbies are culture and nature," one candidate writes) and self-referral, as when one of Jacek's mistresses tosses aside a novel by Páral to welcome her lover. The translator has nicely captured the narrative's propulsive movement: "The overturned chairs laughed with their legs in the air while the lovers lay on mattresses as if on waves."

To readers who wonder how Páral will ever stop telling his breakneck story, his ending comes as a chiding smack.

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The last page rounds out everything that went before it with a neatness that is almost pat—yet the novel probably wouldn't have worked if the farseeing engineer inside the improvising novelist hadn't been on duty, aiming all those disparate voices and incidents toward a blueprinted culmination. By raising expectations of aesthetic chaos only to overturn them at the last, Páral has made *Catapult* something of a tease, as well as a book to look back on admiringly.

As a story, *The Four Sonyas* is an equally shaggy dog. The title refers to four aspects of Sonya Cechova, a nineteen-year-old redhead whose surname, the female form of "Czech," makes her an ethnic Everywoman. There are the everyday Sonya; Sonya-Marie, "quiet, gentle, defenseless, and happily subservient"; Sonya-Marikka, "provocative, bold, risk-taking, wild"; and Antisonya, who "always tells the unpleasant part of the truth." The winsome incarnation of these personae brings out autocratic tendencies in men, who are wont to exploit, kidnap, and otherwise take command of her.

As the novel begins, the orphaned Sonya's willingness to sell kisses has made her the drawing card for her guardian's pub. Her sexual allure has made her the obsession of Jakub Jagr, another engineer at the Usti textile factory and a man so enamored of figures that he ranks Sonya vis-à-vis other women by assigning numbers to their various traits and uses mathematical models to gauge his chances of winning her hand.

For her part, Sonya is enraptured, first by Ruda Mach, the Tarzan-like sensualist who deflowers and deserts her, and then by the elusive Manek Mansfeld, who seduces her emotionally (but not physically), vanishes, and directs her conduct from afar through short, horoscopic messages sent in reply to her multi-page confessionals. Like the catapult-seeking Jacek, Sonya thrives under external guidance (among her four faces, "happily subservient" Sonya-Marie is usually at the fore). The urge to forfeit what limited freedom one still has may be endemic to a socialist country—or so Páral leads the reader to believe. At any rate, Manek is just the manipulator to keep Sonya in thrall.

Owing to a string of kidnappings, job switches, and changes of residence, Sonya is every bit as mobile as Jacek; and, like *Catapult*, *The Four Sonyas* ben-

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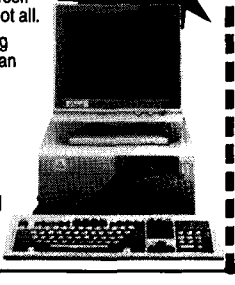

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efits from Páral's structural know-how. Yet something is lacking in the later work: in truth, there is hardly a Sonya at all. Profound characterization does not appear to be one of Páral's strengths or interests (though he can imbue grotesque supporting players—like the anal-retentive Jakub and his guffawing, militaristic father—with Dickensian vividness). His inside knowledge of Jacek keeps *Catapult* tethered to a solid core character, but Sonya is a bonbon without a center, and the novel suffers from her vagueness.

Even so, *The Four Sonyas* provides capital entertainment. Páral's sensibility is a pleasure to follow as it darts from item to item: Sonya prepping herself for a kiss raffle (under orders from her guardian, she dabs machine oil on her lips "to prolong . . . kissability"); running commentary on the official travesty of full employment (anyone without work can be cited as a "parasitic element," while many a jobholder molders at his desk all day); the culinary sleight of hand by which Sonya's guardian bamboozles his customers, nursing a quantity of meat through eleven days of cooking, garnishing, disguising, and retrofitting while the underlying substance rots.

Despite Páral's cynicism about particular jobs, he exhibits a lyrical tenderness for manual labor and the industrial underpinnings of the Czech economy. Lying in bed one night, Sonya muses that "the scent of metal, motors, and men is everywhere in this city [Usti] that never goes to sleep, and it is the scent of excitement, of being thrilled, this city's special scent." In another of Páral's self-referential passages she longs to read a novel that eschews the standard fictional settings of "castles, ocean liners, film studios, and worldly Parisian hotels" to show "how sweet life can be in nothing more than industrial old Usti n. L." *The Four Sonyas*, of course, is that novel.

In the 1980s the author turned to science fiction; one of the untranslated novels is titled *The War With Many Animals*, a play on his countryman Karel Čapek's *War With the Newts*. Perhaps the threat of government censorship catapulted Vladimír Páral into fantasyland, but I'd like to think he chose the genre freely: how could an engineer-novelist better respond to the dystopia that was Czechoslovak communism than by building alternate worlds of his own? □

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NATHAN BEDFORD FORREST:
A Biography
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A BATTLE FROM THE START:
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HarperCollins, $30.00.

IF A HOLLYWOOD studio were to make a new movie called *The Nathan Bedford Forrest Story*, the studio's publicity people might have to reach back into the advertising of the Old Hollywood for the right promotional line: "The Man You Love to Hate!" For many people who like to read about the Civil War, the Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest has long held an intense fascination, no small part of which derives from his outrageous behavior. Most people would probably agree that he is not a man for our times. He had critics, Northern and Southern, who said that he was not a man for his own times either.

The core of Forrest's fame lay in his audacious, repeatedly successful leadership of a comparatively small command in many engagements in the western theater of the war. He was resourceful in attracting adventurous, risk-taking recruits from Mississippi, Tennessee, and Kentucky. They moved on horseback, though they often fought on foot. Forrest and his men built around themselves a mystique, even when the larger army of which they were a part suffered defeat.

In February of 1862 Forrest broke out of the Federal lines around Fort Donelson before General Ulysses S. Grant sealed his important victory by capturing the fort. Two months later Forrest mounted an effective rearguard action against the Yankees as the Confederates withdrew into Mississippi after the Battle of Shiloh. Like many other soldiers, Forrest learned to hate the main Southern commander in the west, General Braxton Bragg. After serving under Bragg in the futile invasion of Kentucky and in the fruitless victory at Chickamauga, Forrest told Bragg off, threatening him with bodily harm, and headed back to the places he knew best: Mississippi and western Tennessee.

Much of Forrest's military mystique came from his independent operations in 1864. He befuddled Federal commanders and thwarted superior numbers. He threw in all his troops, staked everything on the chance of battle, and won. When General W. T. Sherman became Federal commander in the west, he wanted to take Mississippi out of the war and end any mobile Confederate threat to Federal supply lines in Tennessee. But Forrest kept embarrassing Sherman's subordinates, even riding into the supposedly secure city of Memphis, Forrest's home town.

Most notoriously, Forrest's men overran Fort Pillow, on the Mississippi River, on April 12, 1864. The fort had no strategic importance, and Sherman had ordered that it be abandoned. But that order had not been obeyed, and the attacking Confederates caught in the fort hundreds of black Federal soldiers, as well as many white soldiers, whom the rebels killed in a sustained, purposeful bloodbath. Thereafter the name of Nathan Bedford Forrest was, as he several times acknowledged, permanently linked with Fort Pillow.

Forrest accompanied General John Bell Hood on the western army's last, suicidal invasion of Tennessee at the end of 1864, and he knew that the defeat of Hood's force was effectively the end of the war in the west. Yet he was one of the last to surrender.

From the stories of Forrest's wartime exploits a consistent picture of the man emerged. He was ruthless and relentless. His orders and aphorisms—true or apocryphal—were endlessly quotable: "I did not come here to make half a job of it. I mean to have them all." "War means fighting, and fighting means killing." "Charge them both ways!" He killed enemy soldiers at close quarters, and he was ready to do the same to any of his own men who shrank from combat. In the saddle he faced the enemy's bullets without flinching, and got quite a few of his horses killed in the process. Everybody was afraid of Forrest—the Yankees, his own men, his fellow Confederate generals—because if you crossed him, he would kill you.

Forrest's peacetime career had much

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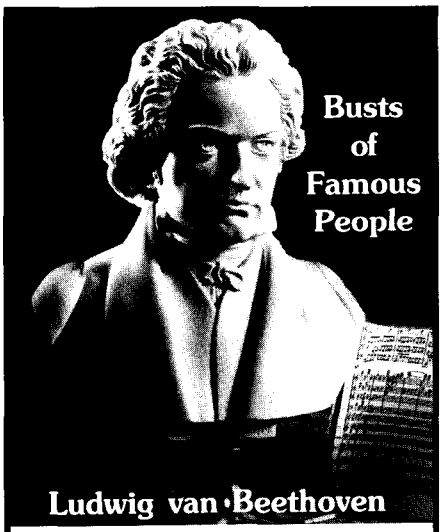

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in common with this record of ruthlessness. Before the war he rose to wealth by his own wits as a skillful dealer in slaves. As this buying and selling made him richer, he began to establish himself as a planter, an ambition interrupted by the war. At war's end Forrest advocated accepting defeat, and he applied for a presidential pardon. Yet he also became a major figure in—perhaps the principal leader of—the Ku Klux Klan. Though in public he unconvincingly and inconsistently disavowed any role in the Klan, he readily avowed his opposition to Reconstruction. Several times he made veiled or open threats about renewed violent action in defense of home rule and white supremacy. He said in 1868, "If they send the black men to hunt those confederate soldiers whom they call kuklux, then I say to you, 'Go out and shoot the radicals.'"

In his postwar attempts to recoup his fortune, Forrest dabbled in construction, insurance, railroads, and the employment of debt-peonage labor. He considered proposals for the importation of cheap labor from Africa and China. Finally, near the end of his life, he contracted for convict labor. In his leisure hours he devised a plan for leading a volunteer force to conquer Mexico.

JACK HURST and Brian Steel Wills have written sympathetic biographies of Nathan Bedford Forrest. And the many admirers of Shelby Foote will recall that Forrest is one of the heroes of Foote's great narrative *The Civil War*. These writers enjoy Forrest's military exploits. They quote his pithy epigrams with relish. They do not share all of Forrest's opinions, but they want their readers to see his virtues. What were those virtues?

The biographers' case is not a revisionist one. They do not offer a broad reassessment of Forrest's wartime career designed to raise his ranking among Civil War generals. They do provide clear, fast-moving accounts of his campaigns and his skill. He was a minor player in some major battles and a major player in minor battles. He could never have been an important theater commander. The picture of Forrest in command of a Confederate Army is about as plausible as a picture of Robert E. Lee beating his subordinates with his fists and threatening to kill Jefferson Davis.

Nor have these biographers set out to find a "new" Nathan Bedford Forrest,

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though Hurst undertakes to modify and humanize the familiar austere portrait. Both writers—especially Wills—have resourcefully tracked down newspaper accounts, legal documents, and other sources. These are all the more important because Forrest wrote little and preserved less. No substantial record of his life and opinions survives in his own writings. Both biographers have had to rely on descriptions of Forrest by others and on words attributed to him. We see Forrest reflected indirectly in reminiscences and remembered utterances. And in them he looms larger than life, like Thomas Sutpen in William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* He was big because he made big moments in the lives of people who afterward told over and over what he had said or done to them, though he seemed not to care whether they lived or died.

Forrest's virtues, in the eyes of his biographers, were great American qualities. He was a natural, untutored military genius. His defeated opponents and his less successful colleagues were frequently linked to West Point. The United States Military Academy before the Civil War was primarily an engineering school that made no pretense of offering systematic instruction in strategy or tactics. But the battlefield triumph of a man who could not spell over graduates from a military school has a perennial appeal to Americans as a satisfying victory for the self-made man. In Hurst's view, the Forrest story "recounts the implacable struggles of an intelligent man of action against the longest kind of odds."

Forrest spoke directly and bluntly to everyone, high and low. He did not quail in the presence of the enemy or of men who outranked him. He mastered others but knew no master. He was an empire of one. Small wonder that his demeanor would appeal to some people caught in the manifold compromises and concessions of late-twentieth-century American life—to those who yearn to say, Take this job and shove it. This seems to be the main attraction that his character has for his biographers.

Celebrating Forrest's defiance of hierarchy and convention is problematic for these biographers. They admire his demeanor; he embodied the admonitions "Never explain" and "Never apologize." Hurst and Wills want to convey the efficacy of such a self-sufficient stance in the hardscrabble life that For-

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The U.N. Security Council, unconcerned apparently about dreadful things being perpetrated in many parts of the world, "strongly condemned" Israel for the temporary expulsions of 400+ Hamas terrorist leaders, and threatened sanctions. In order to be able to judge Israel's actions, the world must understand who and what Hamas and the Muslim fundamentalists really are.

What are the facts?

A fundamentalist terror organization. Hamas is a Muslim fundamentalists terror organization. Hamas ideology combines pan-Arab religious and fundamentalist principles with radical Palestinian aims. It insists that "all of Palestine—from the (Jordan) river to the (Mediterranean) sea is holy Arab territory" and that its "liberation" is the immutable aim of the movement. Autonomy for the Palestinian Arabs, or even a Palestinian state, as proposed by the P.L.O., are totally unacceptable or at best tactical steps in the "liberation of all of Palestine."

Terror also against fellow Arabs. A basic ingredient in the ideology of Hamas is the use of terror, not only against Israeli Jews, but against all who oppose its political and religious zeal and ideology. Hamas has killed hundreds of Palestinians, usually in the most gruesome manner and often in front of their families, for being "collaborators" with the Israelis or for suggesting political solutions to the "Palestinian problem" that are not in full accord with Hamas' ideology. But Hamas and the Islamic fundamentalists are not foes of just Israel. They are in mortal conflict with all secular Arab regimes. Some years ago, Iraq's Saddam Hussein boasted that he (personally) had shot 600 of "those traitors." In 1982, in response to a fundamentalist uprising, President Assad of Syria ordered an all-out assault in which an estimated 20,000 people were killed. During the 1988 riots in Algiers, the army unceremoniously shot and killed between 150 and 300 demonstrators. Similar bloody scenarios have been replayed in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and other Arab countries. There was never any public outcry. The media largely ignored those events, and there was certainly no emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council.

"A basic ingredient in the ideology of Hamas is the use of terror, not only against Israeli Jews, but against all who oppose its political and religious zeal and ideology."

Expulsion, a legitimate punishment. Different countries have different customs and different laws. In the United States, we have the death penalty—by hanging, lethal injection, firing squad, electric current, or poison gas—which is considered barbaric in much of the world, including Israel. The Arabs have public beheadings and amputations, which we consider to be beyond the pale. The Israelis, having adopted their laws from the British mandatory power, punish with expulsions for certain serious crimes.

There are those who insist that the expulsions of the Hamas terrorists are in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. But the Convention was composed to prevent repetition of the crimes of the Nazis, who, to serve their manic purposes, transported entire populations (or their survivors) from one end of Europe to another. And the Convention clearly states that "...the occupying power may undertake total or partial evacuation...if the security of the population...demands it." Certainly, Israel, just as any other country, has the right to self-preservation and the duty to protect its citizens.

It is clear that Israel has shown and continues to show a forbearance towards those who have vowed to destroy it that no other country would have shown. No other western country would tolerate such open sedition and armed insurrection. The fact that the Israelis have allowed the so-called intifada to survive for so many years, that they have expelled for only limited terms the 400+ leaders of the Hamas terrorists, is testimony to Israel's humanitarianism. Can the world imagine what Israel would do if Syria, for instance, would expel the Jews still remaining in that country? Israel would immediately take them in of course, just as it has taken in hundreds of thousands of other refugees and expellees from Arab countries.

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rest led in peace and in war. At the same time, they want to make him palatable to a modern audience, notwithstanding his career as a slave trader, an enemy of the United States government, a Klansman, and a singularly violent person. To try to make him palatable, they do what he refused to do: they explain and apologize. Jack Hurst emphasizes every instance in which Forrest made concessions to the needs or the capacities of black people. He suggests that Forrest deserves credit for striving to restrain the Ku Klux Klan after northern Democrats warned that the Klan's actions were delaying defeat of northern Republicans at the polls. Hurst reminds us that the Civil War included many killings of surrendering, unarmed men other than those at Fort Pillow. Brian Steel Wills involves himself in a tortuous attempt to choose the right label for the killings at Fort Pillow—as if calling them a "slaughter" rather than a "massacre" would somehow steady the needle on our moral compass.

The heart of both these books is a narrative of Forrest's wartime exploits, not a close examination of the moral or societal implications of his career. Both authors would much rather deal with the winning of the Battle of Brice's Cross Roads than with the meaning of Fort Pillow—or even with the meaning, if any, of Brice's Cross Roads. Hurst provides the smoother, more deft narrative of Forrest's actions. Wills's book is the more fully researched, and Wills gives us the more searching scrutiny of Forrest.

Some readers might find in the Forrest story an array of questions that don't often engage these authors. Forrest, supposedly a clear-eyed, no-nonsense realist, nevertheless enthusiastically embraced the self-defeating enterprise of secession. Forrest's powerful war-making had a strangely suicidal streak: he wanted to fight as often and as hard as he could until he could not fight any more. After he ostensibly acceded to the outcome of the war, he associated himself with postwar recidivist violence while evading responsibility for it. Where was the bold, blunt Forrest in his public equivocations about the activities of the Klan? Was Forrest, like the fictional Thomas Sutpen, the carrier of a perverse death wish, befouling his own grandest ambitions? Was he bound to beat them all or die trying? Don't ask. Never explain. Never apologize. □

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Send your solved Puzzler "Connect the Dots" (found on page 131) to: *The Atlantic Monthly*, May Puzzler Contest, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116. *The Atlantic* will randomly draw three names from among all correct entries received by May 13. The winners' names will be published in the July issue. In addition, each of the winners will receive a complimentary one-year subscription to *Tough Cryptics*.

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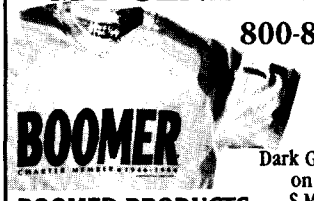

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Brief Reviews

REBEL POWERS *by Richard Bausch. Houghton Mifflin/Seymour Lawrence, $21.95.* Mr. Bausch's admirable novel describes the disintegration of a family as it is recalled, years later, by the son. Thomas, the narrator, was a teenager when the seemingly solid world of the Boudreauxs dissolved with his father's discharge from the Air Force and sentence to a prison term. The bewildered youth, his confused kid sister, and their enigmatic mother bounce from a ramshackle rented place to a boardinghouse in Wilson Creek, Wyoming, site of the federal prison. They meet strange people on the road and in Wyoming, never feeling at ease with anyone, even those who assume that Boudreaux senior was jailed for opposition to the Vietnam War. That war and its aftereffects are a major cause of their troubles. The other cause is the inflexible temperament of Tom's mother, a woman who cannot adapt to any alteration in her chosen course of action. The novel moves slowly because the author gives careful attention to each point and character—to the waifish young woman met on the train west; to Mrs. Wilson, whose desire to keep a quietly respectable boardinghouse is thwarted by pornography and the Boudreaux family reunion; and to the wavering comprehensions of young Thomas. The leisurely pace of the narrative permits a thorough, always interesting study of the distortion inflicted on ordinary people by the conflicting pressures of circumstance and character.

THE LAST FULL MEASURE *by Richard Moe. Holt, $29.95.* The First Minnesota Volunteers was quickly organized after the fall of Fort Sumter, and served with distinction from First Bull Run to Gettysburg, where the outnumbered regiment held the Federal line after Sickles's foolish and potentially disastrous advance into the peach orchard. Casualties were estimated at 82 percent. The First —what little was left of it—was mustered out in 1864. Mr. Moe records the history of those brave men through their own letters and diaries. There was no censorship of military mail in those freewheeling days, nor any attempt to silence the press. Several hometown papers had correspondents in the ranks, one of whom, "Raisins," of the Stillwater *Messenger*, became something of an irritant to the authorities. Soldiers could, and did, complain eloquently in letters home. They denounced stupid officers and hard tack, explained inefficiency and tactics, described the building of a good camp fireplace and the niceties of foraging (translation: stealing) pigs and poultry. They even attempted verse. Their spelling was sometimes erratic but their command of language was sound. To use an old Yankee phrase, they had character. Mr. Moe has done a fine service in introducing the First Minnesota to modern readers.

LOITERING WITH INTENT *by Peter O'Toole. Hyperion, $21.95.* Mr. O'Toole's memoir is written in a style so idiomatic and so laced with racetrack jargon that a non-British reader may at times be baffled. The book is also not at all what one expects from a distinguished actor, for it is less concerned with the prelude to a stage career than with the author's obsessive interest in Hitler. Mr. O'Toole was a boy during the Second World War, and Hitler made a permanent impression on his young mind. The result is an inventive, idiosyncratic, often amusing, sometimes alarming reminiscence.

OPERATION SHYLOCK *by Philip Roth. Simon & Schuster, $23.00.* Subtitled "A Confession," Mr. Roth's book is actually fiction with some factual elements scattered through it. The premise is that Real Roth (not to be confused, except by the unwary, with the author) finds that a Fake Roth has preceded him to Israel and is there representing opinions obnoxious to Real Roth. Muddleheaded attempts by Real Roth to control Fake Roth rather suggest the kind of Gothic heroine who prowls the castle cellarage at midnight when she should have called the police before tea. This effect is surely not intended by the author, whose purpose turns out to be a discussion of the difficulty of maintaining, and properly exercising, Jewish identity in a non-Jewish world. Mr. Roth (the author) arrives at no defi-

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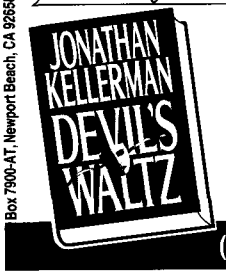

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nite conclusion, but his intention is serious despite the hall of mirrors in which he conducts his one-man debate.

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS *by James Oliver Robertson and Janet C. Robertson. HarperCollins/Aaron Asher, $30.00.* The Robertsons bought an old house in Hampton, Connecticut, in 1967. The place had been occupied by the Taintor family since the 1790s and came with a sideboard, a sleigh bed, some portraits, and, presently, a mass of family records. The Taintors were evidently unable to throw out anything with writing on it. Bills, business transactions, legal documents, and letters from friends, relatives, and townsfolk gone west were all pack-ratted but, one suspects, never looked at again. By beating through the trove, the Robertsons have been able to reconstruct more than a century of small-town life and the larger reasons for the progression from farming village to summer resort to bedroom community. At times the authors seem a trifle vague about period manners, as when they express surprise at the merrily raffish correspondence of young men of the 1820s, but on the whole they have created—or resurrected—a worthwhile piece of Americana.

ANGELS & INSECTS *by A. S. Byatt. Turtle Bay, $21.00.* Ms. Byatt's two novellas are, like her novel *Possession*, based on the literary and intellectual world of the nineteenth century. *Morpho Eugenia* combines consideration of Darwin's evolution theory with the story of a naturalist who marries into the gentry and finds, behind the rose gardens and the lace-and-ribbon prettiness, an unnerving resemblance to ant society. *The Conjugial Angel* is shorter and sharper, involving the effects of mourning carried to neurotic lengths. It is also funny in spite of gruesome visions and much quotation from "In Memoriam," for Mrs. Papagay, a practitioner of automatic writing, is a mischievous observer of her seance colleagues, including her grotesque admirer, Mr. Hawke, whose Swedeborgian babblings about heavenly union precede an earthly pounce. Both stories are essentially romantic fantasies, written with grace and an expert use of literary reference and the practicalities of dress, deportment, and money. They are a pleasure to read.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

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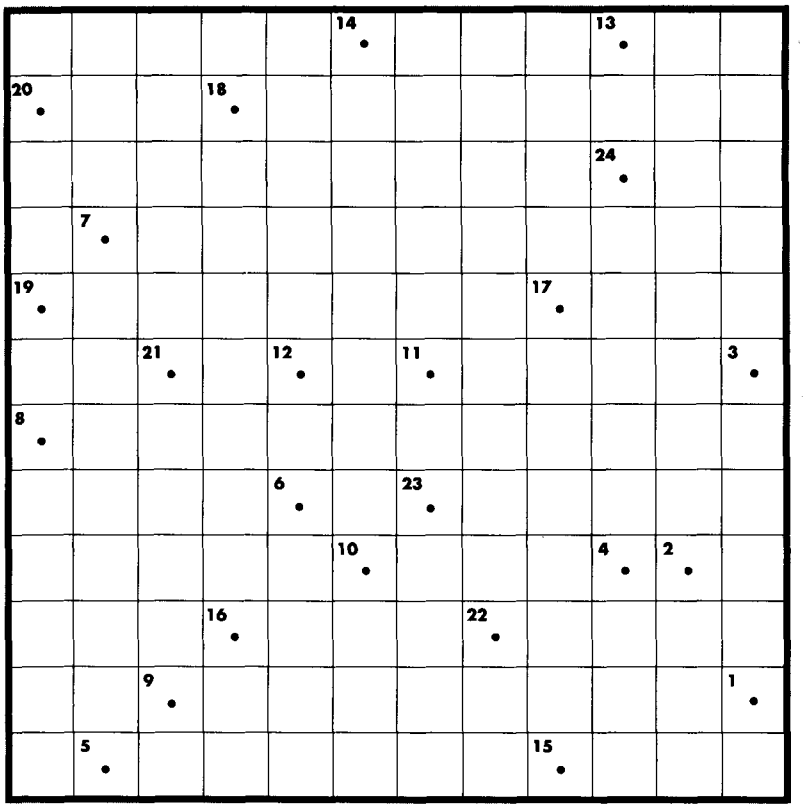
THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

CONNECT THE DOTS

Each clue's answer is to be entered in the diagram normally, either across or down. Its location, however, is given only by the number of a square in which a dot shares space with one of the answer's letters. This letter may occur anywhere in the word. A diagram entry may incorporate more than one dot, but it is identified by only one. If bars signifying entries' beginnings and ends were shown, they would form a pattern that would look the same when rotated 180°. Solvers may be aided by mentally connecting the dotted letters in numerical order. Dots will, after all, be connected. Answers include seven proper nouns.

See page 128 for Puzzler contest details. The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 126.



CLUES

1. A writer's dots I disconnected (5)
2. Oklahoma tribe gave medical attention to skating figure, reportedly (11) (*two words*)
2. Nakedish punk?! (8)
3. Award accepted by bad man's opposite (7)
4. Dark lady's trap circled by beast (8)
5. Regions of Mars harboring animals, originally (5)
6. Mobile isn't a very old city (5)
7. Dog just mentioned eating up Polynesian food (11) (*two words*)
7. Pair of Spaniards treats twitching with drops (8)
8. Woman's name that's satisfying the Devil when written backwards (7)
8. Fruit-producer's chemical medicine caused a scare (7)
9. Weary, endured (4)
9. Warlike Spaniard routed ten rancheros (12) (*two words*)
10. Malodorous band suppresses scream (7)
11. King Edward got an education (7)
11. Note English Queen grabbing piece of rope to tie another knot (7)
12. Log topped by writer's last letter? (6)
13. Chopped piece of a log back by a tree (5)
14. Cold wind, fog, sun, and, ultimately, hail (7)
15. Damage from hydrogen bomb, perhaps (4)
15. For instance, a shirt sleeve in man's grip (7)
16. Money's returned that is for singer? (7)
16. State of Rocky Graziano after losing $1,000 (7)
17. Be in hurry to get fellow's handle (5)
17. Sort of bolt one stuck in axles, shifting to neutral (7)
18. Pacifier finally put in small child's crib (4)
18. Worry earphone's pin loose (12)
19. Ben started and was the pitcher (6)
20. Spoils the middle of the swamp (5)
21. A dashing of parmesan for a guy with a point? (8)
22. Outspokenly observed, "You're getting older" (6)
23. Sign outside of hill dweller's shed (6) (*hyphenated*)
24. Broadway musical appeared before *Kismet*? (7)
24. Fifty-one-pound yellow flower (4)

NOTE: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

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WORD HISTORIES

BY CRAIG M. CARVER

waffle

By late last year many people were impatient with the Federal Communications Commission. Howard Stern, the "shock jock" of New York radio broadcasting, had for several years been blatantly flouting FCC rules governing "indecent" programming, but officials were reacting indecisively. "I think they are *waffling*," said Terry Rakolta, the founder of Americans for Responsible Television. "They have to be more definitive. . . ." *Waffle* (to equivocate) may come from *waugh* or *waff*, an onomatopoeic word meaning "to yelp; a puppy's yelp" ("Women too throughout the same County barked like big dogges: but the children and little ones *waughed* as small whelpes"—Philemon Holland, *Camden's Britain*, 1610). *Waff* became the frequentative *waffle*, "to yelp repeatedly," which soon came to mean "to talk incessantly, chatter foolishly," a meaning that presumably led to today's. It is more likely, however, that the word comes from a different *waff*, a variant of *wave*, meaning "to wave, cause something to move to and fro" ("With order, if they saw 3 sail in the offing, to make 3 *waffs* with their colours"—Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage Round the World*, 1712). The Scots took up the word and made it into the, again, frequentative *waffle*, meaning "to waver in the air, flap, flutter" ("The wee gowans [daisies] . . . boo'd [bowed] an' they beck'd [curtsied], an' *waffled* wi' glee" —Jessie Morton, *Clarkson Gray*, 1867). From the literal waving came the current sense of metaphorical wavering or vacillating.

spree

Japan's Crown Prince Naruhito ended his search for a bride last January when Masako Owada, a Harvard graduate with a budding career as a diplomat in the Japanese Foreign Ministry, accepted his proposal. *The New York Times* noted that the Prince had earlier been quoted as saying he was looking for someone who "shares my values" and is not interested in "going on a shopping *spree* at Tiffany's." One theory has it that *spree* (unrestrained indulgence, splurge) originates in the Indo-European root **ghend-*, "to seize, take," from which resulted the Latin word *praeda* (prey, spoil, booty). From the Latin word came the Gaelic *spréidh* (cattle) and the Scots *spreath* or *spreagh*, "cattle taken as booty; cattle-stealing forays" ("[He was] an old follower of Rob Roy, who had been at many a *spreagh* with that redoutable freebooter"—Sir Walter Scott, *Familiar Letters*, 1808). *Spreagh*, or its variant *spray*, then became *spree*, and its meaning shifted as well, from "rampage" to the milder "splurge." Alternatively, a *spree* being nothing if not spirited, the word may come from the Latin *spiritus* (spirit) through the French *esprit* (spirit; lively wit), which was brought to England in the sixteenth century. Today's common expression *shopping spree* did not appear until about thirty years ago and is probably a variant of the term *spending spree*, which was coined by Aldous Huxley ("We are now squandering the capital of metallic ores and fossil fuels. . . . How long can this *spending spree* go on?"—*Adonis and the Alphabet*, 1956).

scalawag

After a federal court last year ruled against USX (formerly United States Steel) in favor of steelworkers who had lost their jobs just as they were about to qualify for pension benefits, the workers' lawyer declared, "Right now, those *scalawags* . . . are drinking their martinis and eating chicken cordon bleu, but they are not laughing." *Scalawag* (a rascal, loafer, reprobate) may ultimately be from the Latin *schola* (school), which in Old Irish became *scol* (also meaning "school") and yielded the derivative *scolóc* (a scholar, usually one studying in a monastery). Over time *scolóc*'s scholarly associations faded, leaving only the meaning "a tenant of church land." By the time the word entered the Scottish language, it also meant "a bond-servant." Later, in pre-industrial Scotland, farm laborers were called *scolocs* or *scallags*. In America *scallag*, which doubtless found its way to the New World early in the great Scots-Irish immigrations, became *scalawag*, a pejorative term probably influenced by *wag* (a witty person). In the South *scalawags* were white Republicans and, after the Civil War, southerners who worked with northern carpetbaggers to take advantage of loopholes in the congressional plan to rebuild the South ("This invaluable class is composed . . . of ten parts of unadulterated Andy Johnson Union men, ten of good lord and good devilites, five of spuss and seventy-five of *scallowags*"—*Charleston Mercury*, 1862). A *scalawag* is also a poor, undersized animal considered to be worthless, a sense virtually contemporaneous with the other. This has led some to theorize that *scalawag* is an alteration of *Scalloway*, the ancient capital of the Shetland Islands, which are known for their breed of tiny ponies.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID SCOTT MEIER

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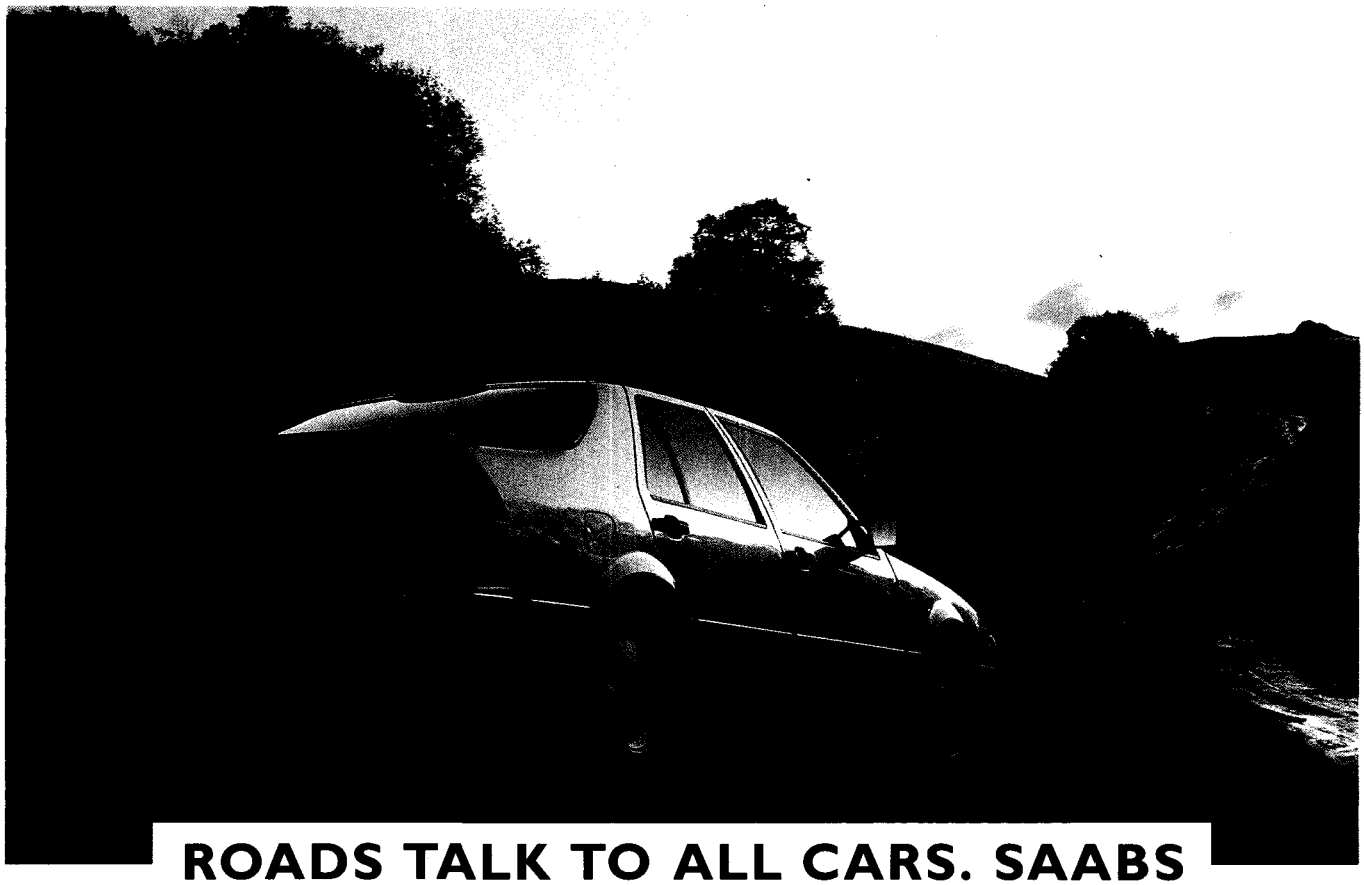

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